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Outdoor Education through Ecological Living for Change in Way of Life

Master in Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life
Thesis 15 ECTS
LiU-ESI-MOE-D--06/008--SE

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### Title
Outdoor Education through Ecological Living for Change in Way of Life

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### Abstract
Human are currently living in a way that profoundly affects the planet, and the lives of future generations. Our value system promotes economic gain over environmental health. We are taking more than we are giving back, stretching beyond the limits of sustainability. Earth cannot sustain the current human lifestyle under these conditions. This is paired with the fact that the current system of education focuses on producing economically productive individuals instead of environmentally and socially aware persons who carefully consider the impacts of their actions. This study examines the capacity for “ecological living” to use outdoor education as a tool for changing the present human way of life. Thirty three ecological farms responded to a questionnaire examining the importance each placed on current vs. alternative values. The respondents also answered questions displaying the relationship between life on their farms and the key components of outdoor education. Results show a positive opportunity exists for using ecological farms and the ecological lifestyle to promote a change in way of life. The results also exhibit a high level of connection between the ideals of outdoor education and the activities that are part of life on an ecological farm. This suggests that by specifically tailoring ecological farms to be educational institutions, a further change in way of life could be expanded. The ecological lifestyle shows potential to educate people in greater awareness of others and the environment, thereby decreasing the human impact on earth and creating an opportunity for future generations.

### Keywords
- Outdoor education
- Ecological living
Thesis Approval

“Outdoor Education through Ecological Living for Change in Way of Life,” a thesis prepared by David Schott in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master’s Degree in Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life. This Thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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I. Introduction

Human beings live on earth. It is our home. Everything that supports us: water, food, air, shelter, comes from the planet earth. But while we depend on our home for our existence, we are currently destroying it in numerous ways. There is no longer a question as to the fact that humans are impacting the natural environment in profound ways. We are toxically polluting our waters, we are sending a constant and continually growing stream of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere, we are depleting resources (living and non-living) at a disturbing rate, we are devastating other fellow inhabitants and their habitats, global population is on an exponential path. We are using our home for maximum profit, and our current path points to us continuing these actions only in greater quantities and at greater rates as we appear to have decided this type of activity is what we were born to do (to use more resources and expand our economies). We are living a life that simply cannot be sustained on and within the bounds of earth. We have reached a level where our home cannot absorb all of our wastes and keep up with the endless supply of our ever growing wants. We are not living sustainably. The planet can not maintain what we are asking of it.

These problems are multiplied by the fact that our systems of education fail to address these pressing issues, instead focusing on producing economically productive young minds that continue this “business as usual” as opposed to environmentally and socially sensitive ones that see the importance of protecting earth.

There is no other choice but to examine ways we can change our current heading. As change this extensive is difficult under the current system, we must start from the base of the problems. We must focus the change at the roots and work our way up. Addressing issues in terms of our own personal actions as individuals and in the form of educational reform are our most viable options for change. Our current direction has quite clearly failed. We must reverse course. Where we have previously used earth for our gain and her pain, we must work with her and in harmony with her systems. Where we have previously acted out of care for ourselves and our own self-interests, we must start to act in the best interest of all people and species living here. Where we have previously sat back content to let “progress” lead
us where it may, we must take initiative to live with intention in order to forge a new and sanguine path for ourselves and future generations.

The aim of the current and future generations will be to find ways to reduce and eventually stop negative human impact and our unsustainable living habits. A large part of the current predicament deals with a lack of knowledge and understanding. People, young and old, do not realize their impact, or if they do, fail to address what can be done to reduce or halt this impact. A new approach towards education is in order for the world as a whole.

This course of change also calls for a new way of “ecological” living – sincerely taking our actions on earth into account as they affect the health of the environment and all others living here. My thesis will explore the components of this new system of education and way of life. Firstly, by examining the values promoted through our current failing system? In comparison, what are the values and ideals promoted through ecological living? I will also examine the lives and practices of those individuals currently living an alternative, ecologically minded life to discover if the core principles of outdoor education and experiential learning are fundamental to that ecological lifestyle. In doing so I hope to discover the educational possibilities that the ecological lifestyle can offer for changing minds, young and old.

I plan to use the WWOOF organization (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) as my source of study for gathering these answers. The WWOOF organization is a compilation of organic farms where the farm owners are working to change the world in a ‘grassroots’ way. Young people interested in this lifestyle and learning more about it have the opportunity to live and work, integrated on the farm, for a number of weeks or months. The study will focus on the ecological and educational exchange between WWOOF farms and WWOOFers who come to work on the farm. I will study this exchange in order to formulate a theory as to the use of education and hands on experience in shaping views and values and changing perspectives about way of life. In this setting I will examine what takes place in terms of outdoor experiences/education and ecological/environmental thinking for young people engaged in an ecologically aware setting.
Before I explain my research and results, it is important to set the stage for the project. This includes clearly defining the most important terms present in the thesis paper, as well as a thorough review of relevant literature and theory pertaining to:

1. Our Current Environmental Dilemma
2. A Deeper Examination of “Way of Life” - Present
3. Historical Perspectives on an Alternative “Way of Life”
4. Our Current Educational Dilemma
5. The Concepts of Outdoor and Experiential Education
II. Definition of Terms

WWOOF

The International WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) Association is set up to connect organic farms with those who would like to volunteer on them. The organization goals:

- To enable people to learn first-hand about organic growing techniques
- To enable town-dwellers to experience living and helping on a farm
- To give experience of life in the countryside
- To help farmers make organic production a viable alternative
- To give people a chance to meet, talk, learn and exchange views with others in the organic movement
- To improve communications within the organic movement
- To provide an opportunity to learn about life in the host country by living and working there (Web 1)

The farms on the WWOOF list generally represent those who want to live an organic lifestyle: Simple, healthful, and close to nature.

WWOOF volunteers ('WWOOFers') do not receive any financial payment. The host provides food, accommodation and opportunities to learn, in exchange for assistance with farming or gardening activities.

WWOOF host vs. WOOOFers

A WWOOF Host - is a person or group of persons owning an organic farm and usually exemplifying an ecological lifestyle offering others to come and experience life on their farm.

A WWOOFer – is a volunteer who comes to work and live on an organic farm usually to assist the WWOOF host and learn more about organic farming and ecological living in the process.
Sustainability

The most commonly used definition of sustainability is “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” which first appeared in the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Dadd-Redalia 17). When a process is sustainable, it can be carried out over and over without negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved.

Sustainable means being able to keep going or able to endure; sustainability, then, is acting in such a way that life on earth endures on into the future, providing for the needs of all citizens and creatures while maintaining the natural functions, resources, and beauty of the planet.

‘Sustainability is not just about environmental protection but also includes sharing resources more equitably and improving the quality of our lives in terms of access to health care, education, justice, work, leisure, and democracy. Sustainability relates to people from all sections of society and countries of the world. It is concerned with both present and future generations. It implies the need for a new ethic based on co-operation rather than competition, quality of life rather than standard of living and community rather than individual interest.’ (Cooper14).

Sustainable Development vs. Sustainability

‘The term “sustainable development is commonly used, especially by politicians and there is a danger that it means all things to all people. It is a contradiction since “sustainability” implies that there are ecological limits which are currently being exceeded, whilst “development” implies economic growth and maintaining the status quo. Sustainable development is acceptable to many governments and business interests because it registers their “concern” but still allows then to follow growth policies. It is a good badge to wear.

The difference between the two concepts of “sustainable development” and “sustainability” is best shown through an example. The former accepts current lifestyles and attempts to manage their impact by technological advances. The latter questions our need for growth and proposes alternative lifestyles. The differences can be shown through attitudes to the car. The “sustainable development” approach argues for lead-free petrol, catalytic converters, and recyclable components whereas
the “sustainability” approach questions our use of the car and looks at alternative modes of transport’ (Cooper 14).

Experiential Education

Experiential education is the process of actively engaging students in an authentic experience that will have benefits and consequences. Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others. Students also reflect on their experiences, thus developing new skills, new attitudes, and new theories or ways of thinking.

The Association of Experiential Education (AEE) defines experiential education as: “a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values” (Web 3).

Experiencing something is a linking process between action and thought. In many respects experience and learning mean the same thing. We can define experiential learning as the insight gained through conscious or unconscious internalization of our own or observed interactions, which build upon our past experiences and knowledge. (Beard and Wilson 16)

The idea of experiential education will be further investigated in the Theory section of the project.

Outdoor Education

Outdoor education has been defined by Donaldson and Donaldson as ‘education in, for, and about the outdoors’ (Donaldson and Donaldson 63). Outdoor education utilizes experiential learning and the out-of-doors environment to accomplish goals usually associated with refining the skills related to an activity or pursuit, socialization and human interaction, personal development, and environmental awareness. Contact with nature and sensory awareness, combined with thoughtful experience form the basis for learning.

The term “outdoor education” will be further investigated in the Theory section of the project.
Way of Life

A course of conduct or style of living (lifestyle). A manner of living that reflects an individual’s values, attitudes and worldview. This includes patterns of social relations, consumption, entertainment, dress, etc... Having a specific "lifestyle" implies a conscious or unconscious choice between one set of behaviors and some other sets of behaviors.

Ecological living

Ecological living is to live in a manner of all encompassing awareness of earth and its processes. Each choice made under such a way of life involves considering the consequences of the action and the way that the decision will affect the environment, and all living within it. Consciousness and care for the earth are paramount in the decision making process.

Ecological living is about protecting and preserving the environment of planet Earth, through recognizing the uniqueness of its various eco-systems and species. Every individual habitat supports all manner of life (Web 2).

A low-impact way of life is achieved by integrating various aspects of ecological design, permaculture, ecological building, green production, alternative energy, community and social interaction, and environmentally conscious decision-making. By minimizing their “ecological footprints” proponents of ecological living hope to preserve the earth for future generations of human beings and other life.

Ecological Footprint

The term ecological footprint is a calculation of human impact on earth. It measures the total area of land and water needed by a person, region, nation, or the entire human race to produce the resources and absorb the wastes of that person/group.

The ecological footprint is a tool for measuring and analyzing human natural resource consumption and waste output within the context of nature’s renewable and regenerative capacity (or biocapacity). It represents a quantitative assessment of the biologically productive area (the amount of nature) required to produce the resources (food, energy, and materials) and to absorb the wastes of an individual, city, region, or country (Web 4).
Footprints are not good or bad per se. Every living entity possesses an ecological footprint; it is the size that differs. On a global scale, humanity’s entire ecological footprint can be compared to the total available natural capital and services. When humanity’s footprint is within the annual regenerative capabilities of nature, its footprint is sustainable. For some it may be surprising to learn that the footprint (i.e. a measure of human consumption) can exceed the planet’s ecological limits, but only for a limited time, by using resources more quickly than they can be renewed (Web 4). At the present moment we are exceeding the planet’s ecological limits.

Worldwide there exist 4.5 biologically productive acres (1.82 ha) for every person on earth. The current per capita footprint of the United States (the nation with the largest) is 23.6 acres (9.57 ha), more than five times the sustainable footprint (Web 4).
III. Review of Literature:
An Investigation into our Current Dilemma

A. Earth & Environment - The Current State of Affairs

We will begin by examining some ideas related to the current state of affairs from a number of environmental scholars.

We are facing some serious issues in relation to the state of the planet. David Orr explains: ‘There is no honest way around the reality that the big numbers having to do with population growth, disruption of the earth’s biogeochemical cycles, species extinction, and the heath of souls, forests, and water are running against us’ (Orr 124).

‘Human beings have always altered their physical environment in order to survive, but the pace and scale of current environmental changes know no precedent. And the longer we wait, the worse the problems become, making solutions seem more and more difficult’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 2).

‘Undefiled nature is being replaced by a defiled nature of landfills, junkyards, strip mines, clear-cuts, blighted cities, six lane freeways, suburban strip sprawl, polluted rivers, and superfund sites, all of which deserve our phobias. The disruption of natural cycles and the introduction of exotic species has destroyed much of the natural diversity that formerly graced our landscapes’ (Orr 135).

‘In 1992 1,670 prestigious scientists, including over 100 Nobel Laureates, signed a “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity,” urging public attention to the “human activities which inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources” (Union of Concerned Scientists, 1992)1. The news is bad and it continues to get worse (Du Nann Winter and Koger 4).

For a long time we have attempted to ignore the warning signs and calls from the scientific community that have alerted us to consequences of our actions, but the research findings are quickly catching up to us. ‘The scientific debate regarding global warming effectively ended in 1995, when the Intergovernmental Panel on

1 Union of Concerned Scientists (1992). World scientists’ warning to humanity. Statement available from the Union of Concerned Scientists, 26 Church Street., Cambridge, MA 02238. (APA Citation Found in Du Nann Winter and Koger page 4)
Climate Change (the IPCC, an international coalition of 2,000 eminent climatologists and other scientists) reviewed decades of research and found that the balance of evidence pointed to human-induced warming. Over the last 7 years, more evidence has poured in, strengthening the scientific consensus, and raising forecasted temperatures. In it’s 2001 report, the IPCC found that the earth was warming up faster than anticipated, and predicted that the globe would heat up by a further 2.5 F to 10.5 F over the next 100 years (IPCC, 2001; National Research Council, 2001) To put that number in perspective, during the last ice age, the world was only 9 F cooler than it is today. Thus, we are looking at the very real possibility of changes in planetary temperature of ice ages magnitudes over the next century’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 15).

This begs the obvious question posed by Anthony Weston in his book “Back to Earth”: ‘Rather than require proof that our present course is disastrous before we change it, shouldn’t we ‘require proof that it is not disastrous before we embark on it?’ (Weston 175). Instead we continue our lives and proceed with business as usual.

We have created a world society that does not function properly. Maybe part of our problem is that as David Orr says: ‘Industrial civilization, of course was not designed at all; it simply happened. Those who made it happen were mostly singleminded men and women innocent of any knowledge of what can be called the “ecological design arts,” by which I mean the set of perceptual and analytical abilities, ecological wisdom, and practical wherewithal essential to making things that “fit” in a world of trees, microbes, rivers, animals, bugs, and small children.’

These singleminded men and women were focused on the accumulation of wealth. This ‘materialism fed the industrial revolution as people came to believe that the primary goal of human beings is to convert natural resources to products and profit. As industrialism and capitalism fed each other, the older ecological worldview faded, a worldview shared by most preindustrial cultures, and included a picture of

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humans as a small part of a spiritualized nature who should pay respect to their natural environments’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 31).

It is not that we fully lack care and concern for the environment, but that our obsession with an always growing economy outweighs this concern. This eventually presents the problems we observe in our environment and societies overall. ‘The environment may be aesthetically pleasing, but it is expendable if economic push comes to shove. The loss of the environment is still seen as an unfortunate but mostly necessary “trade-off” against economic growth’ (Wackernagel and Rees 4). ‘The accelerating resource consumption that has supported the rapid economic growth and the rising material standards of industrialized countries in recent decades has at the same time, degraded the forests, soil, water, air and biological diversity of the planet’ (Wackernagel and Rees 2).

The effects of operating in this manner are also evident in the social disparity of our world. ‘The most prosperous economies still depend a great deal on the ruination of distant places, peoples, and ecologies. The imbalances of power between large wealthy economies and poor economies virtually assure that the extraction, processing, and trade in primary products and the disposal of industrial wastes rarely will be done sustainably. Having entered the global cash economy, the poor need cash at any ecological cost, and the buyers will deny responsibility for the long-term results, which are mostly out of sight. As a result, consumers have little or no idea of the full costs of their consumption. Even if the sale of timber, minerals, and food were not ruinous to their places of origin, moving them long distances is. The fossil fuels burned to move goods around the world add to pollution and global warming. The extraction, processing, and transport of fossil fuel, is inevitably polluting. And the human results of the global trading economy include the effects of making people dependent on the global cash economy with all that it portends for those formerly operating as self-reliant, subsistence economies. Often it means leaving villages for overcrowded shantytowns on the outskirts of cities. It means growing for export markets while people nearby go hungry. It means undermining economic and ecological arrangements that worked well enough over long periods of time to join the world economy. It means Coca-Cola, automobiles, cigarettes, television, and decay of old and venerable ways. The rush to join the industrial economy in the late years of the twentieth century’ and now in the twenty-first ‘is a little like coming on board
the Titanic just after icebergs are spotted dead ahead. In both instances, celebrations should be somewhat muted’ (Orr 162).

‘If there was such a thing as a societal IQ, what we call “developed” societies would be judged retarded….. Overflowing landfills, befouled skies, eroded soils, polluted rivers, acidic rain, and radioactive wastes suggest ample attainments for admission into some intergalactic school for learning-disabled species’ (Orr 50).

‘Furthermore, both human population growth and resource depletion are accelerating at exponential rates, which is what makes the problem so pressing, yet so difficult to directly perceive’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 2).

The culture and effects of television only further muddy the waters. Today, television greatly contributes to the way we view our world, usually with ill consequences. ‘Television of course, is the prime form and worst perpetrator of simulation. Television is now so pervasive that it is apparently no longer possible for psychologists to find a group of nonwatchers large and representative enough to test. The medium is irredeemable. Look at the total message: what actually is learned about “nature” from low-resolution pictures of animal or scenery projected into you living room between beer and auto commercials, programmed in convenient segments among a dozen other segments, “the News,” the soaps? (Nature as one “channel” among others? “What’s on tonight honey?” Whatever “nature” is, according to television, is not whatever is outside of your image filled living room right now.) Nothing of the tempo or the grain or the complexity of actual living worlds remains. What one “learns” is a falsehood of the deepest kind. It would be better not to try to show “nature” at all. Even the “message,” taken in the narrowest possible sense, is radically distorted’ (Weston 109).

There are continual examples of the trivialization of nature through television: ‘Why is it, for example, that E.O. Wilson’s views on species extinction are “balanced” by counterarguments of economist Julian Simon, whose scientific credentials are nil? News as entertainment necessarily avoids arduous details and thoughtful analysis of complex issues that might tax minds whittled down to fie 30-second sound bites’ (Orr 125).

As humans we have trouble solving our own problems and coming to social agreements regarding how we treat each other. It is no wonder then that we often forget that the world is home to many other life forms as well. But Anthony Weston proposes an alternative way to think of and about them. ‘With respect to other
creatures, meanwhile, even the most elementary politeness requires at least thinking about how other creatures might care to live with us (or not)’ (Weston 13). ‘Do we have an inherent right to so much of nature’s productivity at the expense of the several million other species living on the planet?’ (Wackernagel and Rees 57). In our busy lives we appear preoccupied with the details of modern life and we have too many of our own issues to deal with. Thus, how a product we buy or the car we drive affects other animals or life forms is one of the last things on our minds.

Despite the negative consequences of our actions, when asked, people continue to say that the environment is important to them and that they are aware of many of the problems. ‘How can people “know” so much about our environmental predicament and yet continue on with business as usual? How can we go on destroying our resource base while realizing that we are doing it? Why does the public so often relegate matters of the environment, which is the basis of our existence and survival as a species, to the periphery, as though the environment is the special interest of a group of folks called “environmentalists” (Winter and Koger p.27)?

We all need to become environmentalists and to develop a deeper sense of connection to the environment ‘A sane civilization that loved more fully and intelligently would have more parks and fewer shopping malls; more small farms and fewer agribusinesses; more prosperous small towns and smaller cities; more solar collectors and fewer strip mines; more bicycle trails and fewer freeways; more trains and fewer cars; more celebration and less hurry; more property owners and fewer millionaires and billionaires; more readers and fewer television watchers; more shopkeepers and fewer multinational corporations; more teachers and less lawyers, more wilderness and fewer landfills; more wild animals and fewer pets’ (Orr 151). For us, coming home means restoring ecological and human scale to a civilization that has lost its sense of proportion and purpose’ (Orr 202).

‘People can grow up with the outward appearance of normality in an environment largely stripped of plants and animals, in the same way that passable looking monkeys can be raised in laboratory cages and cattle fattened in feeding bins. Asked if they were happy these people would probably say yes. Yet something vitally important would be missing, not merely the knowledge and pleasure that can be imagined and might have been, but a wide array of experiences that the human brain is peculiarly equipped to receive’ (Wilson 118). Could this be the case with our
current lifestyles that are absent from nature? Could we be missing what it truly means to be human? We remain distant from these questions and carry on as usual: ‘we go to school or work, do the shopping and laundry, visit friends and take vacations when we can, and try not to think about the claim that the planet cannot possibly sustain our current lifestyles for very much longer. Perhaps we hope that the doomsday scientists will decide they got it wrong, or come up with some good technological fixes. If we wait it out, we may find that all will be well after all’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 2).

We find other ways to avoid the reality of our predicament and evade the difficult issues of our world. ‘In our era of high technology, affluent westerners spend billions every year to “get away” to exotic locales. They do so surely to escape the high stress and frustration of modern life, but also to relieve its monotony. They spend forty-eight weeks of the year in the same job in a climate-controlled environment; when they go home in the evening, they travel in the same stretch of freeway to a subdivision where all the houses look the same; they watch television programs that reduce the complex issues of life to half-hour segments on a flat screen. They crave diversion, depth, escape. So they fly to Bermuda. Or for a few precious days, they stroll through Disney World’s mockup of the architecturally diverse Midwestern downtown their grandparents once ambled through whenever they wanted to, and spend all the money they saved during the previous forty-eight weeks’ (Brende 150).

‘Our driven, materialist society runs on a core experience of emptiness, and we use consumer products to try to satiate that inner vacuum. Thus, overconsumption is caused by greed, craving, and lack of understanding of our truer selves.’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 208). ‘We consume the earth to ease our pain. But the success of this strategy is fleeting - the pain comes back, so we do more of the same, demanding more consumption-induced oblivion’ (Riebel 48).

Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees do a good job of summing things up: ‘Blind belief in the expansionists’ cornucopian dream does not make it come true - rather it side-tracks us from learning to live within the means of nature and ultimately becomes ecologically and socially destructive’ (Wackernagel and Rees 16).
B. A Deeper Examination of our Way of Life

‘The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity.’ – Henry David Thoreau (Thoreau 216)

What Fulfills Us?

This section will address some deeper questions. Does this lifestyle fulfill us? Are there alternatives to our current path? What values are present? By more closely examining these values we can address the possibilities for change.

We have observed that modern society has set economic goals as a top priority and they have infringed on the ability for us to sustain the planet. But does modern society bring us to a higher level of contentment or the ability to work in positive ways with each other? ‘The tragic irony is that while the consumer society has been stunningly effective in harming the environment, it has failed to provide us with a sense of fulfillment. Consumerism has hoodwinked us into gorging on material things because we suffer from social, psychological, and spiritual hungers….Fullfillment… has to do with the timeless virtues of discipline, hope, allegiance to principle, and character. Consumption itself has little part in the playful camaraderie that inspires the young, the bonds of love and friendship that nourish adults, the golden memories that sustain the elderly. The very things that make life worth living, that give depth and bounty to human existence, are infinitely sustainable’ (Durning 169). ‘Sustainability will require a reduction in consumption in wealthy societies and changes in the kinds of things consumed toward products that are durable, recyclable, useful, efficient, and sufficient’ (Orr 62).

What is it that we are looking for? What do we really need to be fulfilled? ‘People need, among other things, healthy food, shelter, clothing, good work to do, friends, music, poetry, good books, a vital civic culture, animals, and wildness. But we are increasingly offered fantasy for reality, junk for quality, and convenience for self-reliance, consumption for community, and stuff rather than spirit. Business spends $120 billion a year to convince us that this is good, while virtually nothing is
spent informing us what other alternatives we have or what we have lost in the process. Our economy has not, on the whole, fostered largeness of heart or spirit. It has not satisfied the human need for meaning. It is neither sustainable nor sustaining’ (Orr 168).

What has been discussed as way of life and values has now begun to show up in studies. Our ‘increased consumption does not deliver the really important goods: Research shows that people are not happier when they own more things. Above a minimal level of poverty level, reports of personal happiness are completely unrelated to financial income or material possession. Since 1950, the purchasing power of Americans has doubled, yet their reports of personal happiness has remained essentially constant. Instead of contributing to our happiness, consumerism is more likely to detract from it because it reduces our potential for building personal happiness’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 79).

‘When asked “what makes you happy?” the vast majority of people mention, before anything else, satisfying close relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners (D. Meyers, 1992)⁴. Well-being also comes from active hobbies pursued during leisure time, along with meaningful work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999)⁵, and a sense of personal control over one’s life and circumstances (Langer, 1983)⁶. Leisure time, meaningful work, and personal control tend to become scarce in the mad rush to work harder and own more. Moreover, college graduates with “yuppie values” – who preferred a high income and occupational success over close friends and happy marriage, reported much more unhappiness (Perkins, 1991)⁷. Thus consumerism is threatening not only our environment, but also our psyches’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 80).

‘Empirical studies of people’s happiness shows that it is not how much stuff people own, but the condition of their social relations, their work, and their, leisure time that determines how much fulfillment people experience (D.G. Meyers, 2002).

⁴ Myers, D. The pursuit of happiness: Who is happy and why. New York: William Morrow. (APA Citation Found in Du Nann Winter and Koger page 80)
⁵ Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren’t we happy? American Psychologist, 54(10), 821-827. (APA Citation Found in Du Nann Winter and Koger page 80)
In fact, the race to pay for material possessions is more likely to detract from the quality of relationships, the creativity of our work, and the quantity of leisure time, the primary predictors of happiness. Attempting to meet psychological needs through overconsumption jeopardizes not only our physical habitat, but also our psyches (Kasser & Kanner, 2004)8. (Du Nann Winter and Koger 23).

In many ways we have been tricked into believing that we must continue to consume to bring about our own fulfillment. ‘In a culture in which much is good, more is better, and too much may not be enough it may not seem possible to improve the quality of life while reducing our ecological footprints. However, Vicki Robin of the New Road Map Foundation argues that these trends are actually complementary and there is plenty of academic research to support her claim. Once material sufficiency is secured, people’s happiness is no longer correlated with national or personal income. It seems that “more is better” is an inherently frustrating game promoted by the fallacy of confusing quantity of things with quality of life. It turns out that the best things in life are not “things.” In fact, having fewer possessions does not need to deprive us, but can be liberating. True fulfillment comes from being with others and contributing to their lives, rather than from taking and withdrawing…..The trick is to focus our lives on maximizing fulfillment rather than income’ (Wackernagel and Rees 135-136).

Social Relationships

Social connections and interactions are deeply related to our view of the environment. ‘The first step toward reducing our impact is to recognize that the “environmental crisis” is less an environmental and technical problem than it is a behavioral and social one. It can therefore be resolved only with the help of behavioral and social solutions. On a finite planet, at human carrying capacity, a society driven mainly by selfish individualism has all the potential for sustainability of a collection of angry scorpions in a bottle. Certainly human beings are competitive organisms but they are also cooperative social beings. Indeed, it is no small irony (but one that seems to have escaped many policy advisors today) that some of the

most economically and competitively successful societies have been the most internally cooperative - those with the greatest stocks of cultural and social capital’ (Wackernagel and Rees xi).

Our social relationships have been affected in profound ways, separating us from each other, and from the consequences of the choices we have made. Anthony Weston in his book “Back to Nature” refers to the opportunities that are opened when these social connections are re-established. He tells about a time when the power had gone out in his neighborhood for a period of days one summer. ‘The result was that for nearly a week there were nightly barbecues for everyone in the neighborhood. People you usually saw only as they sped off to work would suddenly invite you over for lobster or steak, all you can eat. An entire lost civility and sense of community began to arise. Even more striking was the new scene in what had previously been a well-lighted neighborhood. Without electricity and with nowhere else to go, people would just sit for hours in someone’s backyard and watch the full moon rise. Finally the electricity came back on and people hurried back to their jobs and their televisions. Still, for a moment, we knew something else, another possibility, brooded over by the old moon’ (Weston 113). ‘Modern technology, I suspect, far from being neutral in its effects, has more than one underlying purpose or built-in tendency: besides reducing the need for physical effort (a kind of material surrender), it helps us avoid the need for cooperation or social flexibility (a kind of social or metaphysical surrender)’ (Brende 80).

The reflection of this social problem can be seen during interactions with those around us. ‘People lacking a sense of community that undergirds the practice of virtue are not likely to care how their actions affect the larger world in any but the most superficial way. People who regard their welfare narrowly are unlikely to support large-scale social change when it costs something. Hence, without a virtuous public that cares deeply about the protection and enhancement of life, there will be no constituency for hard choices ahead and for the policy changes necessary for sustainability’ (Orr 62).

In his book “Better Off,” Eric Brende addresses social interaction in relation to physical work when discussing the idea that “many hands make light work”. Even work becomes a way of forming social bonds. ‘You’d forget you were working and get caught up in the camaraderie, the sense of lightened effort. This surely must rank among the greatest of laborsaving secrets. Work folded into fun and disappeared.
Friendship, conversation, exercise, fresh air, all melded together into a single act of mutual self-forgetting’ (Brende 31). ‘Manual labor was both the occasion of the parties and the substance that got us mixing and conversing. It was the nonalcoholic cocktail. Physical work, then, served more than one function. Besides putting bread on the table and vigor into the physique, it also provided special social elixir’ (Brende 32).

Community must be of central focus in forming a new path for society. ‘By community I mean, rather places in which the bonds between people and those between people and the natural world create a pattern of connectedness, responsibility, and mutual need. Real communities foster dignity, competence, participation, and opportunities, for good work. And good communities provide places in which children’s imagination and earthly sensibilities root and grow’ (Orr 143).

In this same sense, citizenship will be required to take on a new meaning as well. ‘We need an ecological concept of citizenship rooted in the understanding that activities that erode soils, waste resources, pollute, destroy biological diversity, and degrade beauty and integrity of landscapes are forms of theft from the commonwealth as surely as is bank robbery. Ecological vandalism undermines future prosperity and democracy alike’ (Orr 168).

The re-establishment of social bonds is an important task we must accomplish. While we increase this interconnectedness between each other, we must disassemble the dependences we have on “things” and come to realize the value in a simpler and sufficient life. ‘We need another revolution that transforms our ideas of what it means to live decently and how little is actually necessary for a decent life: a sufficiency revolution’ (Orr 145).

Change of Pace

Slowing down will help us recognize and reflect on where we are. Eric Brende speaks of this concept during his experience of life away from the confines of technology: ‘And this explained not only why time moved more slowly but also why we had more of it, why we were able to relax and read the way we were doing right now: in the absence of fast-paced gizmos, ringing phones, alarm clocks, television, radios, and cars, we could simply take our time. In being slower, time is more
capacious. The event is only in the moment. By speeding through life with technology, you reduce what any given moment can hold. By slowing down, you expand it’ (Brende 67). Only from somewhere outside the loop, only from a position, of true stasis, could it even be noticed. Only in the deep repose of a summer’s evening, serenely planted in a twilit cottage, savoring rich ideas, could I regain my bearings” (Brende 68).

Because of the race mentality of our modern world, many of us are forced to take shortcuts ‘Shortcuts lead to emergency mending sessions in order to piece back in what was cut out, to lengthen what was shortened: Computer users, cramped in a cubicle all day long, jogging around the block. Bureaucrats and financers, zooming ahead along their career paths, then reversing gears to attend school concerts, ball games, and parent meetings. Captives of the technological environment fleeing for brief weekends to mountains, beaches, and rustic cabins’ (Brende 67). ‘For the better part of the day they are in transit, simply speeding forward, never arriving. In a world in which everything is in motion, motion finally comes to seem the absolute, the unfailing standard by which everything else is gauged. Progress becomes its own self-justifying logical loop, the endless cycle like that of the dynamo before which Adams bowed.’ (Brende 68).

Cost vs. Price

A final discussion that is relevant to the traditional way of thinking is that of cost vs. price. For many, the terms evoke the same meaning. But are they the same? ‘The cost of a thing,” Henry David Thoreau once wrote, “is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.” Thoreau knew what some have yet to discover; the difference between cost and price. Prices are what we pay at the checkout counter, are specific and countable. Costs, on the other hand, include (1) things of value that cannot be measured in numbers; (2) things that could be measured but that we choose to ignore; (3) the loss of things that we did not know to be important until they are gone.’ ‘The practice of ignoring the difference between price and the true cost is the stuff out of which historians write epitaphs for whole civilizations. The difference between price and cost is also the matter of honesty and fairness between those who benefit and those who, sooner or
later, are required to pay. One effect of not paying full costs is that we fool ourselves into thinking that we are much richer than we are’ (Orr 172-173).

Du Nann Winter and Koger state it like this: ‘humans continue to deplete resources because the real costs of consumption are not yet contingent on our actions. When we pay artificially low prices that do not reflect the cost of resource replacement, or pollution clean up involved in production, we are rewarded for inappropriate behavior. Fossil fuel consumption is a classic example. Giving people a token to ride the bus is trivial compared to the real costs we should be charged to drive cars. Gasoline prices reflect short-term market availability, not costs incurred from air pollution, global warming, or ozone depletion, so we continue to drive cars that in reality we cannot afford’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 31).

Ecological Footprint + Sustainability

As a final way to conclude the circumstances related to our current dilemma, it is worthwhile to examine the relevance of ecological footprint to the discussion and in its ability to gauge the impact each of us has on earth.

Moving forward will mean openly understanding that our current way of life is not sustainable on earth. ‘If we are to live sustainably, we must ensure that we use the essential products and processes of nature no more quickly than they can be renewed, and that we discharge wastes no more quickly than they can be absorbed’ (Wackernagel and Rees 7). This is the fundamental concept of our ecological footprint. ‘Ecological footprint is intended to show how dangerously close we have come to nature’s limit’ (Wackernagel and Rees 56).

‘A world upon which everyone imposed an oversized Ecological Footprint would not be sustainable – the ecological footprint of humanity as a whole must be smaller than the ecologically productive portion of the planet’s surface’ (Wackernagel and Rees 15). This means that the earth could not currently support today’s world population at North American standards, much less the burgeoning population of the near future (Wackernagel and Rees 14). Meanwhile the developing billions look up to the west and desire the same material wealth and luxury as us. ‘Recognition that not everyone can become as materially rich as today’s North Americans or Europeans without undermining global life-support should impose greater accountability on the wealthy and give the poor greater leverage in bargaining
for development rights, technology transfers, and other equity measures’ (Wackernagel and Rees 57). In order ‘to accommodate sustainably the anticipated increase in population and economic output of the next four decades we would need six to twelve additional planets. The only alternative, if we continue to insist on economic growth as our major instrument of social policy, is develop technologies that can provide the same levels of service with six to twelve times less energy and material….One thing is for certain, however: we cannot sustain development on phantom planets’ (Wackernagel and Rees 91).

We can reduce our footprints without sacrificing quality of life. ‘Small ecological footprints do not necessarily imply a low quality of life. In fact, Kerala, a southern state in India, has a per capita income of about a dollar a day (less than a sixtieth of North Americans incomes). However, life expectancy, infant mortality, and literacy rates are similar to those of industrialized countries. The people in Kerala enjoy good health care and educational systems, a vibrant democracy, and a stable population size. It seems that Kerala’s exceptional standard of living is based more on accumulated social capital than on manufactured capital. The world has much to learn from the people of Kerala’ (Wackernagel and Rees 99).

‘Sustainability will remain a hard sell until we can show that people have more to gain than to lose by changing there ways’ (Wackernagel and Rees 137). This project is an offshoot of that idea. How can we promote a change in way of life? ‘To those who say that any such vision is economically impractical and politically unrealistic we can only respond that the prevailing vision is ecologically destructive and morally bankrupt (to say nothing of potentially lethal)’ (Wackernagel and Rees 146).

C. Historical Perspectives in Alternative Living

‘It would be of some advantage to live a primitive frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessities of life and what methods have been taken to obtain them.’ - Henry David Thoreau  (Thoreau 7)
Next we will examine the literature pertaining to an ecological way of life. What are some of the values embodied in this alternative course of life? We will start with an historical examination of those focused on living a simple life separate from industrial life and conditions. Though years ahead of their time, they saw the path before them as a direct route to the environmental and social dismay that we are experiencing now. They presented a way of living that could work in harmony with the environment. Included here among others are Emerson, Thoreau, and Nearing.

‘He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man’ (Emerson 297).

Scott and Helen Nearing moved to the Vermont countryside during the early 1930’s in search of an alternative way of living from the current ideals and problems that were enthralling society. In their book “The Good Life”, the Nearing’s address many of the issues pertinent to their time and the values that made up their lifestyle.

‘When we moved to Vermont we left a society gripped by depression and unemployment, falling a prey to fascism, and on the verge of another world-wide military free-for-all; and entered a pre-industrial, rural community. The society from which we moved had rejected in practice and in principle or pacifism, our vegetarianism, and our collectivism. So thorough was this rejection that, holding such views, we could not teach in the schools, write in the press or speak over the radio and were thus denied our part in public education. Under these circumstances, where could outcasts from a dying social order live frugally and decently, and at the same time have sufficient leisure and energy to assist in the speedy liquidation of the disintegrating society and to help replace it with a more workable social system’ (Nearing 4)? We desired to liberate and dissociate ourselves, as much as possible, from the cruder forms of exploitation: the plunder of the planet; the slavery of man and beast; the slaughter of men in war, and of animals for food’ (Nearing 5).

Economy vs. Environment

Economics and the pursuit of money have always been of utmost importance and part of the way of living in industrial society. How did these writers view economy?
Emerson saw the issue quite clearly and simply: ‘The hunger for wealth, which reduces the planet to a garden, fools the eager pursuer’ (Emerson 306).

Thoreau also had a clear idea of where our current society was leading the future. ‘We have built for this world a family mansion, and for the next a family tomb’ (Thoreau 25).

“Civilization,” said Mark Twain, “is a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessaries.” A market economy seeks by bally-hoo to bamboozle consumers into buying things they neither need nor want, thus compelling them to sell their labor power as a means of paying for their purchases. Since our aim was liberation from the exploitation accompanying the sale of labor power, we were as wary of market lures as a wise mouse is wary of other traps’ (Nearing 155).

‘Livelihood is the central core around which most people build their lives. There are exceptions, of course. But the majority of human beings, notably in industrial communities, dedicate their best hours and their best years to getting an income and exchanging it for the necessities and decencies of physical and social existence. They must meet the demand of livelihood or pay a heavy penalty in social disapproval, insecurity, anxiety and finally in physical hardship’ (Nearing 151).

‘Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to the luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meager life than the poor’ (Thoreau 9).

At the forefront of leaving the system were the Nearing’s views toward the economic dealings of industrial society. ‘We sought to make a depression free living, as independent as possible of the commodity and labor markets, which could not be interfered with by employers, whether businessmen, politicians or educational administrators’ (Nearing 5). Nearing had this to say about the 1930’s economic situation: ‘Current practice in the United States economy called upon the person who had met his needs for necessaries to turn his attention forthwith to procuring comforts and conveniences, and after that to luxuries and superfluities. Only by such procedures could an economy based on profit accumulation hope to achieve the expansion needed to absorb additional profits and pay a return to those investing in the new industries’ (Nearing 154).

Instead of money, other values were pursued by these men and women. ‘As I preferred some things to others, and especially valued my freedom, as I could far hard
and yet succeed well, I did not wish to spend my time earning rich carpets or other fine furniture, or delicate cookery, or a house in the Grecian or the Gothic style just yet’ (Thoreau 47).

‘A customer with a ten dollar bill can get wonderful results in a department store. But put the same person in the backwoods with a problem to be solved and an inadequate supply of materials and tools. There money is useless. Instead, ingenuity, skill, patience and persistence are the coin current. The store customer, who comes home with a package under his arm has learned nothing, except that a ten dollar bill is a source of power in the market place. The man or woman who has converted material into needed products via tools and skills has matured in the process’ (Nearing 158).

‘William Cooper, in his Guide in the Wilderness said wisely. “It is not large funds that are wanted, but a constant supply, like a small stream that never dies. To have a great capital is not so necessary as to know how to manage a small one and never to be without as little’ (Nearing 159).

Health

Health and physical activity were highly regarded in these alternative lifestyles and at the forefront of change in lifestyle. ‘We knew that the pressures of city life were exacting, and we sought a simple basis of well-being where contact with the earth, and home-grown organic food, would play a large part’ (Nearing 5). ‘In a word, we have practiced health by conducting ourselves in a way that keeps us well’ (Nearing 379). ‘In other words, we can avoid sickness and ill health by adopting life styles that bypass illness and stabilize good health’ (Nearing 382). ‘Balanced, healthful living requires at-oneness with all aspects of nature’ (Nearing 384).

‘Tension is to be avoided, in the interest of health. This is particularly the case in urban living under conditions of congestion, high speeds, noise and other irritants which impair and undermine human well being. Those who advocate health should live wisely and sanely, socially as well as bodily’ (Nearing 384).

‘Muscles grow strong and responsive with exercise. Muscles of the spectator go flabby and shrink. This rule is equally applicable to the problems of physical function and social action’ (Nearing 390). ‘Personally, we in our entire homesteading venture have endeavored to keep our social as well as physical muscles in shape. We
tried, as a couple, and insofar as we could in groups, to set up and continue a life pattern to maintain health and sanity in a period of social insecurity, conflict, disruption and disintegration’ (Nearing 390).

**Simplicity**

Simple living was also a core characteristic of this way of life and a way to exit the destitution of urban industrial society. ‘In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one’s self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely; as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial’ (Thoreau 48). ‘Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify’ (Thoreau 62).

For Thoreau this presented the opportunity for a deliberate, meaningful, responsible, purposeful life (as opposed to the hurried pursuit of monetary gain associated with industrial life). ‘I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived’ (Thoreau 61).

Helen Nearing mentions this idea as well. ‘Like multitudes of people all over the world, we are seeking a good life – a simple, balanced, satisfying life style. Like them, our aim is to lend a hand in shaping the planet into a homelike living place for successive generations of human beings and for the many other life forms domiciled in and on Mother Earth, her lands and water’ (Nearing 388). ‘We were seeking an affirmation, - a way of conducting ourselves, of looking at the world and taking part in its activities that would provide at least a minimum or those values which we considered essential to the good life. As we saw it, such values must include: simplicity, freedom from anxiety or tension, an opportunity to be useful and live harmoniously. Simplicity, serenity, utility, and harmony are not the only values in life, but they are among the important ideals, objectives and concepts which a seeker
after the good life might reasonably expect to develop in a satisfactory natural and social environment’ (Nearing 15).

‘Where should we go in search of the good life? We were not seeking escape. Quite the contrary, we wanted to find a way in which we could put more into life and get more out of it. We were not shirking obligations but looking for an opportunity to take on more worthwhile responsibilities’ (Nearing 13).

Leisure

Leisure time represented an important value to these men and women as well: ‘Our aim was leisure during a considerable portion of each day, month, or year, which might be devoted to avocational pursuits free from the exacting demands of bread labor, to satisfying and fruitful association with one’s fellows, and to individual and group efforts directed toward social improvement’ (Nearing 15).

Thoreau also wrote about the importance of leisure time: ‘For more than five years I have maintained myself thus solely by the labor of my hands, and I found, that by working about six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living. The whole of my winters, as well as most of my summers, I had free and clear for study.’ (Thoreau 47)

Social Interaction

Social relations also became a pillar to stand on. ‘In a word, we were trying to make a livelihood, and once our needs in this direction were covered, we turned our efforts in other directions, - toward social activities, toward avocations such as reading, writing, music making…’ (Nearing 33). ‘We aimed to make the mealtime a social event. Friends staying with us or visitors who happened to drop in knew that meals were social occasions’ (Nearing 50). ‘In the early days, community affairs were held outdoors during the summer and early autumn. There were picnics at Pikes Falls and at different homes, marshmallow roasts, husking bees, house-raising bees, dancing parties’ (Nearing 177).

Community was a cherished concept. ‘Old-order Amish farmers, for example, refuse to buy combines not because they would not make things easier or more profitable but because they would undermine community by depriving people of the opportunity to help their neighbors’ (Orr 106).
Freedom

This lifestyle brought a new found freedom: ‘Coming from New York City, with its extravagant displays of non-essentials and its extensive wastes of everything from food and capital goods to time and energy, we were surprised and delighted to find how much of the city clutter and waste we could toss overboard. We felt as free, in this respect, as a caged wild bird who finds himself once more on the wing. The demands and requirements which weigh upon city consumers no longer restricted us’ (Nearing 155).

Slowing Down (Siga Siga)

Speed and hurry were things to be avoided in this new way of life. ‘Why should we live with such a hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine to-morrow’ (Thoreau 63). ‘We were not in a hurry…We took our time, every day, every month, every year. We had our work, did it and enjoyed it. We had our leisure, used it and enjoyed that (Nearing 51). ‘When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, - that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality’ (Thoreau 65).

“I do not think that any civilization can be called complete until it has progressed from sophistication to unsophistication, and made a conscious return to simplicity of thinking and living” - Lin Yutang⁹ (Nearing 188).

IV. Theory – Current Education vs. Outdoor and Experiential Education

A. The State of Education

The way of life that the modern world has chosen to live promotes values that do not provide for our happiness or the well being of the planet. Our education system that supports these values pushes the envelope even farther. The existing education system promotes values that profoundly affect each of us and our environment. The failures of the system are a great contributor to where we stand in terms of global and environmental issues and economic domination of our world. ‘Instead of the fanaticism of the 1000-year Reich, think of the fanaticism inherent in the belief that economies have no limits and can grow forever. It remains the predominant mode of education almost everywhere in an age that still regards economic growth as the highest goal’ (Orr 20). It is commonly believed that ‘the role of education is only to equip young people for work in the new global economy in which trillions of dollars of capital roam the earth in search of the highest rate of return’ (Orr 163).

As well as its economic pretext this education promotes the separation of studies through the concept of specialization and the ignorance of the interrelatedness of planetary systems and the web of life. ‘Students come to believe that there is such a thing as politics separate from ecology or that economics has nothing to do with physics. Yet the world is not this way, and except for the temporary convenience of analysis, it cannot be broken into disciplines and specializations without doing serious harm to the world and to the minds and lives of people who believe that it can be’ (Orr23).

Through specialization and compartmentalization the educational structure creates students with mechanical minds. In doing so ‘education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositaries and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits, which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the
‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other’ (Freire 45-46).

The final goal of current educational practice is to create a long term niche for each person in the global economy, to provide them a career. ‘A career is a job, a way to earn one’s keep, a way to build a long resume, a ticket to somewhere else. For upwardly mobile professionals, a career is too often a way to support a “lifestyle” by which one takes more than one gives back’ (Orr 22). Our education system promotes these slender and inadequate values for our young students. ‘And they are sure signs of the failure of the schools and colleges that presumed to educate them but failed to tell them what an education is for on a planet with a biosphere’ (Orr 164).

If we wish to alter our current destructive path, it is essential ‘that we educate a citizen constituency that supports change and is competent to do the local work of rebuilding households, farms, institutions, communities, corporations, and economies that (1) do not emit carbon dioxide or other heat-trapping gases; (2) do not reduce biological diversity; (3) use energy, materials, and water with high efficiency; and (4) recycle wastes’ (Orr 109).

This brings us to the question: What possibility does outdoor experiential education on ecological farms have to fill this deficiency? Let us begin by examining historical perspectives on education in the outdoors and experiential learning.

B. Historical Perspectives on Outdoor Education and Experience

Emerson saw an educational disconnection with our true environment and our need for a bond with the outdoors. ‘We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten to fifteen years, and come out at least with a bellyful of words and do
not know a thing. We cannot use our hands, or our legs, or our eyes or our arms. We do not know an edible root in the woods. We cannot tell our course by the stars, nor the hour of the day by the sun’ (Emerson book 2 136).

In 1899 John Dewey, the father of experience, wrote that ‘the school has been so set apart, so isolated from the ordinary conditions and motives of life’ that children cannot “get experience – the mother of all discipline” (Dewey 17). His solution required integrating opportunities for students “to make, to do, to create, to produce” and ending the separation of theory and practice. Dewey proposed that the immediate vicinity of the school be a focus of education, including the study of food, clothing, shelter, and nature. Through the study of these things, students might learn “the measure of the beauty and order about him, and a respect for real achievement”” (Orr 110).

Henry David Thoreau also saw the great value in a building solid human character based in the outdoors. ‘Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful house-keeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation: now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper’ (Thoreau 26).

Dewey also addressed the human learning process. ‘As the infant learns to reach, creep, walk, and talk, the intrinsic subject-matter of its experience widens and deepens. It comes into connection with new objects and events which call out new power, while the exercise of these powers refines and enlarges the content of its experience. Life-space and life-durations are expanded. The environment, the world of experience constantly grows larger and, so to speak, thicker. The educator who receives the child at the end of this period has to find ways for doing consciously and deliberately what “nature” accomplishes in the earlier years’ (Dewey 75). We are genetically wired for experiential learning. It has been with us since birth. We ought to educate people with this in mind.

Outdoor experiential settings provide a place for students to exercise their minds and bodies. ‘Freedom of movement is also important as a means of maintaining normal physical and mental health. We have still to learn from the example of the Greeks who saw clearly the relation between a sound body and a sound mind’ (Dewey 63). Nearing points out this ideal in relation to routine jobs taking place on her farm. ‘Turning the mixer with first one hand and then the other,
we got balanced muscle-building, invigorating, rejuvenating physical exercise in the fresh air, under the open sky, -one important ingredient in the maintenance of good health’ (Nearing 46).

How does our environment play a part? Dewey explains: ‘The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when the person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with objects which he constructs in fancy’ (Dewey 44).

We have attempted to separate knowledge from experience and are missing the interdependence between the two. Dewey addresses this idea: ‘In what I have said I have taken for granted the soundness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience – which is always the actual life-experience of some individual’ (Dewey 89). ‘For I am so confident of the potentialities of education when it is treated as intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience that I do not feel it necessary to criticize here the other route nor to advance arguments in favor of taking the route of experience’ (Dewey 89). Contrary to our current system, experiential education holds that ‘the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process. This idea is easily misunderstood and badly distorted in traditional education’ (Dewey 47). When we break the world into pieces, we break the connections between the present and the future and between knowledge and experience. We remove ourselves from choosing where we want to go.

Experiential education involves the connection of theory with practice. ‘From earliest childhood to the final insecure steps of old age, those who put the most into life get the most out of life. This applies to quantity of life and quantity of output. Theory guides; practice determines. The uniting of theory with practice provides a higher degree of assurance and promotes a more rewarding body of dependable guidance for individual and group living’ (Nearing 390). The need to connect theory with practice is expressed by Thoreau: ‘My head is my hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it’ (Thoreau 67).
C. The Present – Outdoor Education and Experience

‘He who studies, studies, studies and does not practice what he knows is like one who plows, plows, plows and never sows.’ – Eric Brende (Brende 165).

Recent theorists have also presented many fresh ideas connected to experience and the outdoors as a classroom. ‘We can define experiential learning as the insight gained through the conscious or unconscious internalization of our own or observed interactions, which build upon our past experiences and knowledge’ (Beard and Wilson 16). ‘Experiential learning undoubtedly involves the ‘whole person’ through thoughts, feelings and physical activity. The recognition of this ‘whole environment,’ both internally and externally, is important’ (Beard and Wilson 5). ‘There is limited value in ‘attempting to pour knowledge into the heads of young people without relating it to experience’ (Beard and Wilson 26). This is true because ‘we do not really understand an idea until we apply it. We learn more about an idea from experiencing how it works, especially if we remain diligently open to feedback from our experience’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 232).

Through using all of our senses, we are able to piece together our experience. ‘The more senses we use in an activity the more memorable the learning experience will become because it increases the neural connections in our brains and therefore will be more accessible. The greater the involvement of the participant in the learning activity the deeper will be the participant’s learning and therefore the greater the effect on future thought and behaviour’ (Beard and Wilson 6).

Madav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha express the importance of being in nature for understanding human effects. ‘Hunter-gatherers live in the forest, agriculturists live adjacent to but within striking distance of the forest, and urban-industrial men live away from the forest. Paradoxically, the more the spatial separation from the forest the greater the impact on its ecology, and the further removed the actors from the consequences of this impact’ (Gadgil and Guha 52).

Given the opportunity to put these ideals of outdoor education and experiential learning into practice, ‘What might such experiences do? First, they would remove the abstractness and secondhand learning that corrupts knowledge at its source.
Natural objects have a concrete reality that the abstractions of textbooks and lectures do not and cannot have. Second, a course on a river or a forest or a farm might help make up the experience deficit now common among urban and suburban young people whose minds have exposed overly long to shopping malls, video games, and television. Third, it would cultivate mindfulness by slowing the pace of learning to allow a deeper kind of knowing to occur’ (Orr 96).

Environmental responsibility and care is fostered through such a setting. Researchers Kals, Schumacher, and Montada (1999)\textsuperscript{10} have demonstrated that “one’s environmental responsibility is correlated with an emotional affinity toward nature, as well as indignation about insufficient protection of it. People who have spent time in nature, especially with significant others, had emotional feelings about the health of the environment. In other words, past experience in natural settings is a powerful predictor of emotionally caring about the environment, and Geller (1995)\textsuperscript{11} argued that caring about the environment is a crucial predictor of environmentally responsible behavior’ (Du Nann Winter and Koger 72).

D. Farms as a Means for Outdoor Experiential Education

How do farms and farming fit into this model of experience and the outdoors? ‘There is a “loss of the sort of intelligence about the land that once resulted from the close contact with soils, animals, wildlife, forests, and the seasons fostered by farming and rural living……farms have been in the large part the places where Americans were instructed in the realities of nature’ (Orr 175) . ‘Children raised in ecologically barren settings, however affluent, are deprived of the sensory stimuli and the kind of imaginative experience that can only come from biological richness. Our preferences for landscapes are often shaped by what was familiar to us early on. There is, in other

\textsuperscript{10} Kals, E., Schumacher, D., &Montada, L. (1999). Emotional affinity toward nature as a motivational basis to protect nature. \textit{Environment and Behavior}, 31(2), 178-202. (APA Citation Found in Du Nann Winter and Koger page 72)

words, an inescapable correspondence between landscape and “mindscape” and between the quality of our places and the quality of lives lived in them’ (Orr 161). ‘Once we understand where and why life occurs and how to stop destroying it, a mindfulness about everything spreads. The land tells us what it needs and when; we just have to be awake, to listen, and to scrutinize the ground…a ranch (or farm) is a teacher’ (Ehrlich 111).

Ecological farms can be places that provide a new care for environment and the values that should be of true importance to men. ‘For all of their flaws, farms were schools of a sort in natural history, ecology, soils, seasons, wildlife, animal husbandry, and land use. The decline of ecologically diverse farms and the experience of the natural world that they fostered explains, in large part, I think, the increasing gap between the broad support for environmental causes evident in the public opinion polls and growing ignorance of how ecosystems work and how private consumption and economic growth destroy the environment. In other words, the sharp decline in the number of farms and the shift toward industrial farming has serious consequences for our collective ecological intelligence’ (Orr 117).

Farms present the opportunity for this desperately needed environmental intelligence and education: ‘farms did what no other institution has ever done well. They taught directly, and sometimes painfully, the relationship between our daily bread and soil, rainfall, animals, biological diversity, and natural cycles, which is to say land stewardship. They also taught the importance of human qualities of husbandry, patience, hard work, self-reliance, practical skill, and thrift’ (Orr 118). ‘This leads me to propose that agriculture should be included as a part of a complete liberal arts education, first because it offers an important kind of experience no longer available to many young people from predominantly urban areas. Student responsibility for farm operations would teach the values of discipline, physical stamina, frugality, self-reliance, practical competence, hard work, cooperation, and ecological competence. Second, college farms properly used would be interdisciplinary laboratories for the study of sustainable agriculture, ecology, botany, zoology, animal husbandry, entomology, soil science, ornithology, landscape design, land restoration, mechanics, solar technology, business operations, philosophy, and rural sociology’ (Orr 120).

This renewal of ecological competence is imperative for changing our path. ‘We need smaller scale farms, powered by sunshine, that conserve biological
diversity, serve local and regional markets with a diverse array of crops and products, and sequester carbon dioxide. They will need to be tailored to the specific conditions of particular places, and they will need, more than ever, to be ecologically resilient, intensively managed, and economically agile. We will need to attract a new generation of young people to agriculture and make such enterprises affordable and profitable for them. And on the whole, young people will need to be better farmers than the youths of earlier generations’ (Montmarquet 245).

E. The Outdoor Education Research Model

For my research study I will be using the concepts of outdoor education as defined initially by Higgins and Loynes and expanded by Szczepanski and Nicol. For part of my research I will balance these concepts with how well they are included within the ecological way of life. This will show what ability ecological farms have to provide the outdoor education framework necessary to promote learning.

Let us start with the model that is broadly accepted within outdoor education research proposed by Higgins and Loynes (Figure 1).
1. Environmental Education

Creates opportunities for students to understand the ways in which humans impact their surroundings and the ecosystem. Integral components include hands-on, active, learning activities that stress increased awareness about the interplay between humans and the environment. Environmental education aims to change the views and perceptions that people have about the value of the natural world and also addresses how to modify environmental behaviors. This includes weighing the effects of human action in relation to the environment. Activities rely on the concepts of investigation, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Comprehension takes place through the connection of theory with practice.

2. Outdoor Activities

Are activities taking place for pleasure or some other intrinsic purpose. Some examples might include camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, a family picnic, photography, or even walking the dog. This usually takes place away from the built environment, but can be structured into urban areas as well. The focus is on being outdoors and gaining something from the experience: knowledge, relaxation, skill acquisition, enjoyment of nature, physical exercise, interaction with the environment, stress relief etc. Outdoor games are also included under this heading.

3. Personal and Social Development

Corresponds to the transformation of one’s views about themselves and others. Goals are focused on trust, respect, positive self-esteem, cooperation, teamwork, sociability, care for fellow man, etc. The establishment and development of relationships, contribution to a common effort, clear communication and expression, responsibility for one’s actions, work towards a common effort, inclusive behavior towards others, and positive contribution to community are all part of the objectives and aims of personal and social development.

Szczepanski and Nicol have expanded on the Higgins and Loynes model of outdoor education to include human health and sustainability as represented in Figure 2.
Although these additional components are not a standard of agreement in the field of outdoor education, I have decided to include human health and sustainability because I feel it is important non-the-less to see how these concepts fit into ecological living and education in my research. Quite clearly, the concepts of outdoor education are based on the stable conditions of human and environmental health.

4. Human Health

Healthy humans are in a state of balance and well being. Outdoor education and activity, more often than not, includes exercise and relief from the pressures of the indoor environment. There have been numerous studies showing the links between exercise and health. An outdoor activity as modest as walking in the outdoors can be a way to achieve this sense of balance not only physically, but mentally as well. The fact that outdoor education is able to provide opportunities for
physical, mental, and social well-being means that it can help formulate the necessities for basic human health. ‘Because of its orientation towards active physical activities, outdoor education is well placed to take a major role in health education’ (Szczepanski and Nicol 2). Health is also an important indicator of quality of life and therefore an indispensable social outcome of outdoor education.

5. Sustainable Living

We have surpassed the threshold of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our current processes and actions cannot be continued without persistent negative environmental consequences. ‘The concept of sustainability requires people to consider the well being of the world’s population in relation to its limited resources. Outdoor education has a unique role to play in this because it is the direct experience of our surrounding environment that allows us to see that we are connected to it. If we see we are connected to it then we are more likely to see that if we cause irreparable harm (e.g. the climate, biodiversity, pollution) then it has consequences for our own health and well being.’ (Szczepanski and Nicol 3).
V. Methods

I would like to begin the methods section by addressing some format issues within my thesis. The first of these issues deals with the method of citation within the research, and the second deals with the quantitative vs. qualitative manner of research.

In citing journals, books, and previous research I have used the Modern Language Association’s (MLA) format. This is evident not only in the relevant works cited, but also in the “(Author/Page Number)” style that shows up within the body of text in my thesis. If I have quoted someone who has made reference to another book or article within that same quote, I have cited this in the footnotes at the bottom of the page (these citations are pulled directly from each book and all happen to be in APA format).

I must also address the issue of Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research. ‘Qualitative and Quantitative research represent two distinctly different approaches to understanding the world, that is, the phenomena being researched. Qualitative research has its origins in descriptive analysis, and is essentially an inductive process, reasoning from the specific situation to a general conclusion. Quantitative research, on the other hand, is more closely associated with deduction, reasoning from general principles to specific situations.’ ‘Quantitative researchers place great value on outcomes and products; qualitative researchers have great concern for the impact of the process as well, typically more so than quantitative researchers.’ ‘Qualitative researchers emphasize a holistic interpretation. They perceive facts and values as inextricably mixed. On the other hand, quantitative researchers look for more context free generalizations. They are much more willing to focus on individual variables or factors, rather than to concentrate on a holistic interpretation. Typically, quantitative researchers separate facts and values’ (Wiersma 12-13). Although my research has a generally quantitative component in that it is a questionnaire based survey, involves the deductive format, and includes analysis of data, I have had neither the research time nor the number of responses that would allow me to include the statistical principles of validity and reliability. Instead, qualitative analysis will be used in the process of examination of the data; an attempt to probe/explore the results of the questionnaire. For this reason, I will be analyzing the data, but will not be able to make statistically secure claims. The research is meant to offer suggestions to the
realm of education, but no full assurances as to the results. This said, I do that hope that my research and findings will spark others’ interest to pursue further research.

A. Aim

My goal in this thesis undertaking is to understand if and how ecological living can instill a new set of values through education, and more specifically through the methods of outdoor education. What values are promoted in an ecological setting, and does the format of life on an ecological farm exemplify the ideals of outdoor education? Stated differently: Does an ecological farm typify the approach of outdoor education and if so what values for life are to be gained from this. For this reason I designed a survey that would address these issues and get to the heart of:

B. Research Questions

Part 1 - What are the values (way of life) reflected in ecological farm life that are instilled in those spending time there? Are the values of our present society (and indicative of the problems associated) less prevalent?

Part 2 - How reflective is ecological farm life to the goals and outcomes outdoor education? Is ecological living a useful tool for outdoor environmental education?

C. Group Selection

An attempt was made to find a group of respondents that would be representative of living an ecological lifestyle. Because of the aims and values of the WWOOF organization, the ability to contact the hosts over email, as well as my previous experience on some of the farms, I felt that this group of respondents would be optimal for this particular study.

As part of my original thinking I was hoping to have the opportunity to interview some WWOOFers (those volunteering on WWOOF farms) in order to gain an idea about their experiences and what they had learned. I was also hoping to
interview a pool of people living the standard modern lifestyle, in line with current thinking, in order to have the possibility of comparison between the two groups. But time constraints and depth of study have limited my ability to do this currently. I will instead be referring to the current relevant literature for this side of the comparison.

The questionnaires were sent to over 200 Organic farms from lists compiled by the WWOOF organization. Respondents were sent a letter of invitation to participate in the questionnaire and afterwards were sent the questionnaire in an electronic format through a research based program called “Email Questionnaire.” Respondents had over 1 month to complete the questionnaire and submit it through the web, where the responses were compiled in a database (the questionnaire appears in the appendix at the end of the thesis).

D. Questionnaire

The Questionnaire is divided into these two sections.

Part 1

Lists 40 ideals or values. 20 of these have been selected as values reflective of current first world capitalistic living that have driven our world to its current state. 20 others have been selected that are reflective of values that provide for an alternative good quality of life while still being ecologically sound including the possibility for living a future sustainable life. These values come directly from the literature review and the comparison of current ideals vs. alternative ideals present in a simpler, ecological life.

On the following page a diagram displays the two sets of 20 terms
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional Society</th>
<th>Alternative Way of Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>State of the Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Purchase Goods and Services</td>
<td>Mobility Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Quick and Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of What is Mine</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed/Fast Paced</td>
<td>Time is Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Standard of Living</td>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Property</td>
<td>Maximizing Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Importance of Energy (fossil fuels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning Money</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary/Profit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2

Contains questions as to the effectiveness of ecological living as a tool for outdoor education. The model of outdoor education presented earlier (Szczepanski and Nicol 2005) contains five main elements. The questions attempt to gauge if and how ecological living fits into the framework and ideology of outdoor education. The following shows a break down of the questions that deal with each element of outdoor education:

- Personal + Social Development (PSD) seven questions
- Environmental Education (EE) three questions
- Outdoor Activities (OA) three questions
- Health (H) two questions
- Sustainable Living (S) two questions

There are also:
- Two “Primary” questions assessing how much respondents embody the ideals of living ecologically.
- Two “Final” questions that seek to encompass outdoor education and ecological living as a whole.
- Two written questions gauging the goals and mottos on the farm.

The questionnaire is included in the appendix at the end of the thesis.
VI. Results

Over 200 questionnaires were sent out and 33 were returned. After reviewing the data, I have decided that the best way to view the results is to examine the group as a whole. For this reason I will focus more on the averaged results from each question. I will start by examining the values that are prevalent within the framework of ecological living. (Pie charts in this section represent averaged values that are rounded to a whole number).

A. WWOOF Hosts Responses - Present Society Values

Figure 3 represents the values/ideals of our present day society reflected in the current life of WWOOF Hosts. A value of 1 represents the strongest disagreement, while a value of 10 represents the strongest agreement. (A value of 5.5 represents the middle ground).

**Figure 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WWOOF Farm Responses - <strong>Present Society Values</strong> - Averaged Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Standard of Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick and Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed/Fast Paced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Purchase Goods/Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To better gauge the results, Figure 4 breaks down the averaged responses from Figure 3 into a pie chart that shows the number of responses in 4 different ranges. How much agreement or disagreement did WWOOF hosts express in the values of current society?:

- 1-3 (strong disagreement) 11%
- 4-5 (some disagreement) 63%
- 6-7 (some agreement) 26%
- 8-10 (strong agreement) 0%

**Figure 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. WWOOF Hosts Responses - Alternative Way of Life Values**

Figure 5 represents the averaged responses addressing the values/ideals of an alternative way of life reflected in the current life of WWOOF Hosts. As before a
value of 1 represents the strongest disagreement, while a value of 10 represents the strongest agreement. (A value of 5.5 represents the middle ground).

**Figure 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WWOOF Farm Responses - Alternative Values - Averaged Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free/Leisure Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music/Artistic Pursuits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of Community</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patience/Peace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking/Debating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork/Cooperation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Sufficiency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy Conservation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairness/Equality/Justice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing Thoughts/Ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility/Respect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Health</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning for Life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of Humor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Awareness</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers from Figure 5 are also broken down into a percentage pie chart in Figure 6. How much agreement or disagreement did WWOOF hosts express in the values and ideals of an alternative way of life?:

- 1-3 (strong disagreement) 0%
- 4-5 (some disagreement) 5%
- 6-7 (some agreement) 55%
- 8-10 (strong agreement) 40%

Figure 6 appears on the following page.
C. WWOOF Hosts Responses – Outdoor Education on the Farm

The second set of results represent the level of connection between ecological farm life and the definition of outdoor education (as defined by Higgins and Loynes, and expanded by Szczepanski and Nicol). These results are shown in Figure 7 on the following page. (The numbers in front of each question in Figure 7 only reflect the order in which they were placed within the questionnaire).
**Figure 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WWOOF Farm Responses - ODE + Eco-living Connection - Averaged Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My life and farm are an example of Ecological Living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am living in a way that promotes awareness of the environment and reduces impact on earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal and Social Development Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Myself and WWOOFers cooperate, coordinate, and problem solve on a daily basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The farm creates a place for people to express themselves and feel good about themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Life on the farm relies on community interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The farm creates opportunities for WWOOFers to execute leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Interpersonal skills are valuable and necessary on my farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Group tasks commonly take place here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. WWOOFers succeed at the tasks they set out to accomplish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WWOOFers develop and increased awareness about natural environmental processes while on the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. WWOOFers participate in hands-on activities in the natural environment during the average day on the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. WWOOFers develop practical knowledge in the Natural Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(which may include areas such as ecology, soil science, hydrology, biology, chemistry, geology, and geography) while volunteering here.

**Outdoor Activities**

4. WWOOFing activities on my farm take place outdoors? 8.4

7. How many hours do you spend outside each day? 6.9

9. Work on the farm is physically demanding? 7.0

**Health**

6. The lifestyle that WWOOFers live on my farm promotes health and well-being? 8.2

17. Choices made on the farm are based on healthy living (in respect to food, environment, lifestyle, and social interaction). 7.7

**Sustainable Living**

13. Ideals of sustainability are instilled in WWOOFers that come here. 7.3

19. I am striving to become self-sufficient on my farm. 6.0

**Final**

8. WWOOFers are positively affected psychologically, socially, and physically by their time spent here. 8.1

21. WWOOFers have increased desire to live in an ecological way as a result of their experiences on my farm. 7.1

The answers from Figure 7 are also broken down into a percentage pie chart in Figure 8. The primary and final questions are not included in Figure 8 as the chart is meant only to display the five specific areas in the Szczepanski and Nicol model.
above. Did WWOOF hosts convey a connection between ecological/farm life and the goals/aims/definition of outdoor education?

1-3 (strong disagreement) 0%
4-5 (some disagreement) 0%
6-7 (some agreement) 65%
8-10 (strong agreement) 35%

Figure 8

D. WWOOF Hosts Responses – Written Questions

Two additional written questions addressed why WWOOF hosts have WWOOFers come to their farm; and asked them to present a motto to express what life is about on the farm. I have decided to display some of the answers to these below to give a flavor as to the philosophy of WWOOFing and ecological living. Here, WWOOF hosts share their way of thinking and working with WWOOFers.
1. Why do you have WWOOFers come to your farm?

- “Because I need the help and I like to educate young people who are seeking.”

- “We want to influence people for an ecological thinking and at the same time we get some help with the farm work.”

- “To be a host to WWOOFers is a marvelous privilege. In a sense we really host angels. They come with their gifts and hopefully we can share ours. I can not imagine life without WWOOFers.”

- “I feel it is a rich and rewarding experience for them and us. Coming to the farm changes people in a positive way.”

- “Mutual support and expansion. Mentoring and learning opportunities. We want to share the fruits of our many years’ experience farming and living in the tropics, encourage intercultural exchange between WWOOFers and local communities, and show others that environmental sensitivity/awareness and the concept of sustainability have a generous and practical application regardless of where one eventually ends up. Also because these idealistic people broaden our own horizons and those of our neighbors through sharing THEIR life experiences and native gifts with us.”

- “To make organic farming a viable option for me, to share the beauty of the place with others. To share skills and experiences with others. To provide an example of possible alternative ways of living. To share everyday tasks (which for one person can be boring but for many can be interesting). To have an idea of what other (usually younger) people with hopes to live alternatively are thinking/doing.”

- “I expect help, I look forward to making contacts with foreigners interested in ecological lifestyle”

- “Need of help, sharing and/or teaching experience on respect to the nature.”

- “To give youngsters the possibility to meet real work.”

- “It is not only for help that is needed, but to meet people and exchange experiences and knowledge”

- “We like to share the positive effects of good land management”
• “To help run the place efficiently. To teach them and learn from them also. A basic exchange of ideas and experiences in life.”
• “I used to travel a lot. Now I bring different cultures to my farm instead.”
• “For us first and foremost it is an opportunity to meet interesting young people. We do not try to press anyone into doing or thinking as we do. We just interact with our WWOOFers in what we hope is a positive way and see what happens in the process.”
• “To help, to share, to grow, to exchange ideas, cultures, experience.”
• “We were WWOOFers also and it was the first step to create our farm. I think it is very important to change the experiments.”

2. Create a motto to reflect the “way of life” on your farm.

- “Work with nature, don’t impose your will on it”
- “Hard work with ecology in mind”
- “Everything’s fine with jokes and red wine.”
- “Country simplicity living close to mother nature”
- “Living lightly and in harmony with the universe. A life full of vitality and meaning”
- “Seeking to live life in harmony with the Earth with passion and integrity”
- “Its exciting to see what will happen next. Live simply so others can simply live”
- “Where there’s a WWOOFer (and a will) there’s a way” or “Cup of tea anyone?”
- “Hard and simple life”
- “Don’t worry be happy”
- “Easy going yet energetic”
- “Let’s do it”
- “May all beings be happy”
- “Busy - Good Food – Quiet”
- “Work Hard, Be Proud, Have Fun!”
- “Come, Grow, Enjoy, Love, Here”
“ARBEIT MACHT FREI! No sweet fluffiness and smoky incense will gain you heaven”

“Easy Living”

“Until you spread your wings, you have no idea how far you can walk (Beneath a picture of a waddling penguin)”

“Carry on Regardless - But do it so that you’d enjoy the sight in 50 years time”

“Arbeit macht frei! (kidding!) Hard work with animals and soil will get you in contact with your own feelings.”

“At Mas de Sans, you get out of your experience EXACTLY what you put in to it”

“Work is another manifestation of love”

“Try to be as independent from society as it possible”

“Trying to be what God has made you for to the best of your ability”
VII. Discussion

A. Discussion of Results - Current Values (Part I)

It is important to carefully examine the results to see what they can tell us about the value system promoted on ecological farms as well as their relation to the principles of outdoor education. We will begin with the answers from ranking the values related to our present society. Respondents ranked 74% of the values as either in some disagreement and strong disagreement with their way of life. This gives the impression that more often than not, the ecological lifestyle is at odds with the ideals and path that our current world society represents.

Of these 20 current values, there were four that were rated at less than four out of ten representing strong disagreement with the ecological lifestyle. These were: Quick and Easy (3.9), High Standard of Living (3.8), Competition (3.3), and Television (scoring the lowest at 2.6). Why would these four ideals rank the lowest? Let us examine them one by one with possible explanations as to why they were ranked this way.

Quick and Easy: When living closer to nature, you become more aware of the changes that take place over time. For example: a seed is planted, and must be nurtured over a period of time. It needs water, nutrients, proper sunlight, and soil conditions. Only months later can the benefits be seen, in the form of a flower or fruit. I believe that most people living in an ecological way know that there is little that is quick and easy. Everything comes in due time with hard work. In our current society “quick and easy” usually produces negative effects on other people and our environment that are not so easily undone.

High Standard of Living: There is no doubt that living an ecological farm life away from large cities is less likely to produce great material wealth. But a sufficient level of living is possible that provides for basic needs and the true wealth of life (social relationships, physical health, hobbies, leisure, meaningful work, and control over one’s life circumstances). Our current society promotes the idea of high standard of living in order to encourage the “keep up with the Jones’” mentality that not only fuels the world economy but also contributes to increased and unnecessary precious
resource usage. A few respondents wrote some remarks in the “comments” section at the end of the questionnaire as to how they should answer to this value. Although they felt that they do not care for what is traditionally a “high standard of living”, their lifestyle fulfills them to the point of being a high standard of living for them (using the phrase to represent “quality of life” rather than a monetary “standard of living”). For this reason, I feel that this value would have ranked even lower were it not for some of the respondents who answered the question in that way.

Competition: This idea is fundamental to capitalism (our economic way of living). It is instilled in the young people from the time they are born. The fact that the respondents have ranked it as in strong disagreement with their lifestyle suggests that they have another way of doing things that works in harmony with others and the environment instead of against them (co-operation instead of competition). The Microsoft Word Thesaurus lists ten other words for competition including: rivalry, opposition, antagonism, war, struggle, fight, clash, contest, struggle, battle. Yet our societies have chosen “competition” as a cornerstone for life.

Television: The lowest ranking of all the 40 of the values listed within the study. Television is arguably the most influential tool for the dissemination of social norms. By the low ranking, the respondents seem to make a point that the current values that are promoted in our societies and through television are what have brought us to our current dilemma. As well, many people use television as a way to be entertained, relax, and fill time. The ecological farm lifestyle must use time for productive activities that are more functional, purposeful, and many times relaxing as well.

What about the other one quarter of values which elicited some agreement from respondents? There were five values representative of current society that were ranked as being in some agreement with the ecological lifestyle. These include Progress (5.8), Importance of Energy (fossil fuels) (5.8), Maximizing Efficiency (6.0), Mobility (6.5), and Individualism (6.8).

Progress: This was another question that many respondents made remarks about in the comment section (they were confused as to how to respond). Although I was looking at the way in which the word “progress” is used within confines of capitalism (“you can’t stop progress”), the word can be used in a variety of ways and explains the high ranking. The respondents are trying to advance the ecological movement and this can be viewed as progress as well. The word progress is also used
in terms like “progressive politics” or “progressivism” which denotes favoring advancement toward better conditions in government and society and promoting public policies that could lead to social change.

Importance of Energy (Fossil Fuels): Energy usage has become an established part of the western lifestyle. Living completely ecologically means reducing this usage or eliminating it all together, as the use and effects of fossil fuels affect our world and environment in profound ways. I believe the high ranking of energy importance in these responses reflects the difficulty for all of us to live without energy. This could certainly be a place where we need to focus more energy on developing alternatives. It is worth noting that although the respondents rated importance of energy (fossil fuels) at 5.8, they ranked energy conservation much higher at 7.4. This shows that they have an increased awareness of the need to use energy in the most effective and careful way.

Maximizing Efficiency: Once again this is another word that is used quite extensively within economic circles as a way to express maximizing profits, cheap production, and rapid transport of goods and services. But on the same hand, it is in the interest of those living ecologically to maximize efficiency in the sense that creating a well-organized and proficient way of working can reduce the workload and provide more time for other projects, social interaction, and leisure. Efficiency also includes being thrifty with resources and working in a way of ecological awareness.

Mobility: Living away from urban areas many times means needing to travel greater distances. This usually means driving a car over longer distances to purchase goods and interact with others. I believe that mobility ties in closely with the responses seen in the importance of energy category. Although those attempting to live ecologically may want an alternative, at this moment they have none but to use a car or bus to cover these distances.

Individualism: The highest ranking of the current values within the questionnaire. When I included the term individualism within the questionnaire, I viewed it from a point of selfishness or greed that a competitive society promotes. But from the low responses to values such as competition or profit I believe the farm respondents were expressing something different in their response to the value of individualism. Our society promotes conformity within the system. By it’s high ranking, individualism most likely represents going against the grain and how living ecologically means doing things in a different way in comparison to that conformity.
I also believe it represents the high level of reliance and responsibility that an individual must place on him/herself to live in such a way (taking responsibility for your actions).

B. Discussion of Results - Alternative Values (Part I)

Next we will examine the results of the values associated with an alternative way of life. 95% of the alternative values in this part of the study showed some agreement or strong agreement in the view of the respondents. This suggests that ecological farm living is a very strong way to change our heading from our current worldly values to an open and alternative way of living that works with others and the environment.

One value ranked below the middle ground of 5.5. The value ranking the lowest at 5.2 was Free/Leisure Time. In examination of the way of life on a farm I believe this response comes down to the amount of work that it takes to keep a farm together. There is always something that needs to be done and in the case of most of the respondents their lives are quite full of projects on the farm. Even though it came in lower than all other alternative values, it was still in the middle range of possible responses.

What were the highest ranking values? Three of the values came in at 8.0 or above, representing strong agreement. These include Meaning for Life (8.0), Sense of Humor (8.2), and Environmental Awareness (8.4, the highest of any 40 of the values).

Meaning for Life: Our current societies offer many opportunities for material fulfillment but often little in the way of giving meaning to life. There is little doubt that most of the respondents have found their meaning for life in the ideals of ecological living and a lifestyle that promotes understanding the effects of our actions on others and environment.

Sense of Humor: Humor is strongly tied with a feeling of happiness. The term dates back to Greek times when it was used in reference to human health and emotion. “Laughter is the best medicine” is a phrase commonly used in reference to the ability that humor serves us to evoke these feelings of happiness, thus changing our psychological well-being. Making people laugh or feel happy is something that can change their perspective on life and evoke positive emotions. The WWOOF hosts
interact with many of the WWOOFers each year and humor presents the opportunity for them to communicate in a light-hearted and enjoyable way and creates a sense of cheerfulness on the farm.

Environmental Awareness: The highest ranking of all 40 values. I think it is quite fitting, but also quite understandable why environmental awareness ranked the highest of all values within the study. Those who have decided to live ecologically know that every decision that they make will affect the environment in some way and this must be taken into account. We have taken our environment for granted for too long and we must begin to work with it, instead of against it. Those living on farms are forced to see the interconnectedness of all things and the realization that much of human society is working against nature. Because of their close contact with the soil, air, sun, seasons, weather, plants, and animals they are more conscious and attentive to the fragile boundary between human action and the environmental effects of those actions. The high ranking of this response displays the potential that farms hold to bring this knowledge to a world society that lives in a state of unconsciousness in regards to how it treats the environment.

C. Discussion of Results - Link between Outdoor Education and Ecological Living (Part II)

All questions in this section of the questionnaire show a positive correlation between outdoor education and ecological living. 65% of the questions produced averaged responses (6-7) representing some agreement and thus some correlation between the two ideals. The other 35% of averaged responses (8-10) showed strong agreement and greater linkages between ecological living and outdoor education. The averaged replies of respondents living an ecological lifestyle show agreement in 100% of the questions in reference to the application of the ideals of outdoor education on ecological farms.

Let us examine each area in more detail.
Personal and Social Development

The personal and social development category included seven questions dealing with the ability of farms to instill self confidence and group interaction. Once again the averaged results show agreement in relation to all aspects of personal and social development (the average of all seven questions combined, produced a result of 6.9). It is worth noting that two questions addressing group and community interaction ranked lower than most others (5.8, and 6.4 respectively). I imagine this has to do with the fact that often there aren’t so many people on the farm at one time and thus it becomes difficult to create a sense of community in terms of many people gathered together. Even so, the results still show some level of agreement towards the idea of group and community relations. Also of interest was the highest averaged answer in this category, that farms create a place for people to express and feel good about themselves (8.0). This shows that ecological farms do create a good fundamental setting to foster personal and social development within individuals.

Environmental Education

The next category within Part II of the questionnaire included three questions related to Environmental Education. The averaged results of the three questions combined produced a result of 7.5; once again a significant level of agreement between life on the farm and outdoor education. Although the ability of farms to instill practical knowledge in the Natural Sciences ranked lower at 6.3, the question related to the use of hands-on activities in the outdoors scored quite high at 8.5. This would suggest that while farms could stand to improve at linking knowledge of the Natural Sciences to the WWOOFing experience, they do are currently doing a good job providing opportunities for WWOOFers to experience a range of activities taking place outdoors during their time spent there.

Outdoor Activities

The next category of outdoor education addressed in the survey was the use of outdoor activities. This section produced strong results as well. Of great interest to a present society that spends much time indoors in the built environment was the result that WWOOF hosts averaged 6.9 hours per day spent in the outdoors. This might be more time than an average westerner spends outside during an entire week. We also
see that generally speaking, activities on the farm are taking place outdoors. As time spent outdoors is one of the largest components contributing to an individual’s care and concern for the environment, we can see that ecological farm life contributes quite positively to this. The results also show the use of the physical body as playing an important role in farm life. This idea leads into the next category.

Health

Health is the fourth category within outdoor education that was examined in the study. The two questions in this category averaged together scored 7.9. It is clear from the results that healthy living is an integral component to the ideals of ecological farm life. The answers within the study seem to suggest health as a recurring theme: Health for the physical body, mental health, and the promotion of a healthy environment as well. The ideal of health plays a central role in an ecological lifestyle.

Sustainable Living

The final topic in the questionnaire is that of sustainability. Ideals of sustainability instilled in WWOOFers ranked at 7.3 in terms of agreement. This implies that the ecological lifestyle is on a path in the opposite direction than that of our current society. While our societies continue to expand at unsupportable levels, living ecologically seems to offer a 180 degree change of direction. The ideal of self-sufficiency on the farms ranked much lower. I believe this relates to the fact that although the farmers are separating themselves from some of the negative aspects of our current societies, they realize the importance of being able to interact with others, sharing goods and services, while still maintaining the ability to provide many things for themselves (hence why we see a lower response, but still in agreement at 6.0 in regards to self-sufficiency).

Two additional questions were included in the questionnaire as a way to wrap-up the ideals and feelings from the five main categories of outdoor education. These questions both corresponded positively with the previous results. Respondents felt a high level of agreement (8.1) with the idea that WWOOFers are affected positively (psychologically, socially, and physically) by their experiences in ecological living and also demonstrate a desire to live in an ecological way as a result of their time
spent on the farms (7.1). This shows that farms have the ability to help shape individuals in an affirmative way and also contribute to bringing more individuals to the way of ecological living.

Overall, the results from Part II of the questionnaire display quite clearly the ability of ecological living to provide the components necessary to promote the ideals of outdoor education.

D. A Closer Examination of Written Responses

The written responses included within the thesis have some very positive things to say about working with WWOOFers and the ecological life overall. Although I will only briefly discuss the responses, I invite you to look over the answers (presented in the results section) to gain a greater sense of the potentials of the ecological farm life to provide for a new set of values for our societies and inject a new way of experiential outdoor learning into our education system. I will address some of the recurring ideas that I came across when reading the ideals.

Why do you have WWOOFers come to your farm?

**Education** – A sense of passing on knowledge from someone who already has the understanding and experience; experiential education in the true sense of the word. The educational experience many times flows both directions as WWOOFers bring creativity and skills they have learned elsewhere, as one host says: “a basic exchange of ideas and experiences in life.”

**Sense of Work** – The farms give an opportunity for experiencing the type of physical labor not commonly found in the urban western culture. This creates an opportunity for being outdoors as well as a new appreciation for genuine “work”.

**Encouragement of Ecological Ideals** – To help others understand the importance and meaning associated with an ecological lifestyle; presenting the idea of environmental awareness.

**Exchange** – The sharing of ideas amongst different cultures.
Create a motto for the way of life on your farm?

**Simplicity** – Consciously reducing needs, as well as the need to sell time for money, and in doing so, helping to preserve the environment and others alongside it; letting go of the complexities of modern life and gaining a greater sense of freedom.

**Humor** – Living lightheartedly. Appreciating the happiness that comes from a smile or laughter.

**Harmony with Nature** – Working with nature and in awareness of the environment around you.

**Passion and Vigor** – Doing meaningful work that comes from the heart.

**E. Side Note to Results**

For further analysis it would have been useful to compare the figures compiled by examining the ecological lifestyle with results from a similar questionnaire of values related to those living “normally” in our present society to see what differences may show up. I would speculate that we would see stronger agreement with the present society values and more disagreement with the alternative lifestyle ones from respondents living in this way. Lack of time and availability of a method of random sampling those living in society prevented my ability to study this in greater depth. Taking a look at this comparison is worthy of future study.
VIII. Conclusions

I would like to begin by addressing what claims we are able to make about the results of a study such as this. As mentioned in the “Methods” section of the paper, we are short on the statistical validities necessary to make specific claims about the abilities of farms to bring about outcomes for education and a change in values. Instead, qualitative analysis will be used in the process of examination of the data. There is no doubt that in order to make a definite claim about the ability of farms to serve the aims of outdoor education and promote alternative values, more research is in order. My research exists merely as a stepping stone for further studies and to demonstrate the wealth of potential that farms display in fitting into the principles pursued by the outdoor education model of working. Therefore, the conclusions in this section will instead make suggestions and present the opportunities available for moving ahead based on what the results have shown.

A. Conclusions from Part I

The values explored in the study show that ecological living and farms have presented a different set of values than those promoted by our current societies. WWOOF hosts show much greater agreement with values associated with an environmentally and socially aware way of life than with those values representative of our current western lifestyle. We desperately need this switch in values in order to change our heading from the ideals that are driving humanity. The research proposes that being part of an ecological lifestyle presents the opportunity for a shift in these values. This change in values presents the opportunity to affect the world in profound ways. The possibilities for changing minds young and old through experiences and education in ecological living are present. As part of an educational system, farms offer students the ability to get in touch with values more closely related to the self-awareness, environment, and concern for others and away from values based on economic procurement, profit, and self-centered thinking. Ecological living promotes a change in the weight we put on certain values, and in doing so presents the possibility for altering way of life.
B. Conclusions from Part II

The research also indicates that ecological living and farms show great possibilities for working within the framework of the outdoor education model to achieve its relevant goals. Outdoor educators and farmers (those living an ecological lifestyle) alike should attempt to use these farms as a teaching ground and should explore in a deeper sense what ecological living has to offer to the field of education. What makes this opportunity even richer is that this type of education is not one where students go to school for part of the day to learn in a classroom, or even in the outdoors, but this education is an all encompassing lifestyle where learning continues around the clock and experiences are occurring in many different ways that broaden and expand the mind.

C. Overall Conclusions

While the results from the questionnaires were quite favorable and in agreement in terms of alternative values for life and ability to accomplish the aims and goals of outdoor education through ecological living, there is always room for improvement. It would be possible to set up farms to function more as educational institutions and develop them to more sufficiently achieve the aims of outdoor education and to instill the values necessary for an alternative lifestyle, including greater awareness of consequences of actions related to the environment and other living beings. More intention within the farm/education framework may be necessary. There is a wide range of farms and goals. More should be done to investigate the precise aims and ideas of each farm. Certain farms could be a great deal more useful than others based on the activities and educational processes they have the ability to offer. Another important issue to address is the link between theory and practice and the ability of WWOOF hosts to work as facilitators. If farms are set up as education grounds as I believe they should, the goals of outdoor education could be more wholly realized. Establishing connections and proper facilitation is necessary in order to be sure that associations are made between ecological living and the environmental, social, and political issues involved in any action.
The opportunity for change in lifestyle should not be ignored. By combining the values of this alternative ecological lifestyle with the educational aims and processes of outdoor education, we have the ability to affect the world from a grassroots level. This way of learning can produce ecologically and socially aware individuals that will take the obligations of living on planet earth with other humans and living species seriously. It also presents the opportunity for young people to make their own informed choices and decisions by connecting the knowledge and practice in a way that produces critical thinking and problem solving. Ideals desperately needed in our world today.

As addressed earlier on in the thesis, we are at a point on earth where we are facing some serious changes that must be made if humans wish to continue to call planet earth their home. The current mindset promoted today is absolutely lacking in the care and concern necessary to prevent us from ecological collapse. Within the scientific community there is no question that we must begin to change our direction onto a path that involves greater consideration of the consequences of our actions and the ways in which our decisions will affect the environment, and all living within it. A new lifestyle must be forged for all living on the planet, one that promotes awareness of the environment and reduces impact on earth. The thesis research I have undertaken has attempted to show not the exact path we must take, but merely to suggest one possible means to achieve a goal, a change of direction in order to live in an ecological way.

‘I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, or poverty, poverty, nor weakness, weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.’ - Henry David Thoreau  (Thoreau 216)
IX. References


Dewey, John.  Experience and Education.  New York: Kappa Delta Pi, 1938


Web 2 - Living Ethically.co.uk. “What is Ecological Living?.” Living Ethically.co.uk. Online. 04/12/06.
http://www.livingethically.co.uk/Pages/ecological.htm

Web 3 – Association for Experiential Education (AEE).  “What is Experiential Education.” AEE. Online. 4/17/06.

A. Email Invitation to Participate in Research Questionnaire

Dear WWOOF Host,

My name is David Schott and I have been active with the WWOOF organization as a WWOOFer over the last 4 years and have visited farms from the USA and Europe, to as far as Central America and Asia as well. After spending much time traveling and working as a WWOOFer, I decided to return to school to pursue a graduate degree. I am currently a Master’s Student in Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Living at Linkoping University, Sweden. For the culmination of my studies I am completing a thesis project.

During my times spent on WWOOF farms I have seen that WWOOF is having positive effects in the way that young people think and is in turn creating new educational opportunities for sparking change in our world. Therefore I have created my thesis project as a way to learn more about the principles of Ecological living and the results that WWOOFing produces in the form of people’s way of life.

The focus of my project is to discover the contribution of ecological living to way of life.

For this reason I am interested in gaining some information from WWOOF hosts about your current way of life and some of the activities on your farm. I have composed a questionnaire that is comprised of about 30 or so questions. At first glance, the questionnaire may look long and daunting, but they are all multiple choice and presented in an easy selection format. I have tested the questionnaire on my fellow classmates and the questionnaire took an average of about 15-20 minutes.
Because I have been on many WWOOF farms, I know the value of time and the need to use it wisely. I do hope that you can find this short bit of time for my questionnaire. It will be of great help to me in my research. I hope that my research is able to benefit WWOOF as well as spark more interest in ecological living and quality of life additionally.

If you are unable to fill out the questionnaire I will understand as well and I thank you for your time in reading this email.

I will be sending the questionnaire in an attachment in a following email. You should be able to click on the attachment and it will open (or you may need to click “open”). The results are confidential and information will be compiled without respect to names or specific farms.

Thank you in advance for your time and all the best to you on your farm. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you would like to receive the results of the project.

Sincerely,
David Schott
Email: davsc894@student.liu.se  phone: 46 708 161 434
Thesis Advisor: Dusan Bartunek bartunek@ftvs.cuni.cz  phone: 420 604 219 760
B. Questionnaire Sent to WWOOF Ecological Farms

Questionnaire – Linköping Masters Program in Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Living

Please complete the following questionnaire by filling in the multiple choice answers.
Then save the document and return it to David Schott (davsc894@student.liu.se)

Thanks for your help!!

Part I

Stop and think for a minute about your current state of living. Then respond to the following statements based on the level at which your current life reflects these ideals.

For Example: How much does________ play a role in your life?

Please enter the number that corresponds to your feeling of importance about each idea or issue.
1 - This ideal is in no way reflective of my way of life.

10 - This ideal is 100% reflective of my way of life.

0 – Don’t know

How much does________ play a role in your life?

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<th>Progress</th>
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<td>Teamwork/Cooperation</td>
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**Part II**

Please rate each of the following statements based on your agreement or disagreement. Select from values 1 - 10

1 = Strongly Disagree

10 = Strongly Agree

0 = Don't Know

Please feel free to clarify any answers or add comments at the end of the first section

**Primary** ? 1. My life and farm are an example of Ecological Living

(Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -

**PSD?** 2. Myself and WWOOFers cooperate, coordinate, and problem solve on a daily basis

( Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -

**EE?** 3. WWOOFers develop and increased awareness about natural environmental processes while on the farm.
OA? 4. WWOOFing activities on my farm take place outdoors

PSD? 5. The farm creates a place for people to express themselves and feel good about themselves.

H? 6. The lifestyle that WWOOFers live on my farm promotes health and well-being.

OA? 7. How many hours do you spend outside each day?

Final ? 8. WWOOFers are positively affected psychologically, socially, and physically by their time spent here.

OA? 9. Work on the farm is physically demanding

EE? 10. WWOOFers participate in hands-on activities in the natural environment during the average day on the farm.

PSD? 11. Life on the farm relies on community interaction.

Primary ? 12. I am living in a way that promotes awareness of the environment and reduces impact on earth.

S? 13. Ideals of sustainability are instilled in WWOOFers that come here.

PSD? 14. The farm creates opportunities for WWOOFers to execute leadership.

PSD? 15. Interpersonal skills are valuable and necessary on my farm.

EE? 16. WWOOFers develop practical knowledge in the Natural Sciences (which may include areas such as ecology, soil science, hydrology, biology, chemistry, geology, and geography) while volunteering here.

H? 17. Choices made on the farm are based on healthy living (in respect to food, environment, lifestyle, and social interaction).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSD? 18. Group tasks commonly take place here</strong>&lt;br&gt; (Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S? 19. I am striving to become self-sufficient on my farm.</strong>&lt;br&gt; (Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSD? 20. WWOOFers succeed at the tasks they set out to accomplish.</strong>&lt;br&gt; (Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final? 21. WWOOFers have increased desire to live in an ecological way as a result of their experiences on my farm.</strong>&lt;br&gt; (Please enter your answer from 1-10 or 0) Here: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22. Why do you have WWOOFers come to your farm?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23. Create a motto to reflect the “way of life” on your farm.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24. Please comment on any question above if you would like to. Include the question number as well.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REVIEW OF MASTER THESIS

David Schott

*Outdoor Education through Ecological Living for Change in Way of Life*

The thesis of David Schott is a great overview through actual theme of increased unsustainable life style of young people. Through the research, the author brings the alternative perspectives to the consumerist way of life. The thesis shows author’s personal relation to the theme and professional knowledge and orientation in the subject of study. There is a good presentation of literature in the chapter Review of Literature and Theory – Current Education vs. Outdoor and Experiential Education which is good theoretical background for following information. The part about the history of experimental learning could go deeper to the history line.

The author puts a good analysis of methods, definition of terms and quotation of literature. Structure of text is good, sometimes format is less well-arranged (different size and type of letters, comments of pie charts on next page).

There are interesting real answers from respondents. The results are unfortunately influenced by little sample of returned questionnaires what has an effect on result objectivity. But this could be good basis for next research as author says.

There are some questions for the author connected with the theme of the thesis which could be answered in examination time:

1) What was the main reason to choose this topic for your thesis? Why did you choose the farm as an example of way to the learning through ecological living compare to the others possibilities?

2) What does need to be necessary changed (in schools, in farms, …) before the model of Outdoor Ecological Education in farms will be part of school education system as a process of learning ecology and sustainable living?

3) In the part about the OE Research Model the author has written about sustainable living and global environmental harm. Can you give some examples of sustainable living skills by results of the research at ecological farm?

4) Are there any risks or problems in using the model of learning through ecological living in current commercial lifestyle and different priorities of societies (schools education system)?

Finally the Title of the thesis is very useful and actual in this time and whole work shows great overview of the theme of Outdoor Environmental Education. It is a high quality base for next research in that field. It shows deep author’s interest in this topic.

Olomouc, The 9th of May 2006

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REVIEW OF MASTER THESIS

David Schott

Outdoor Education through Ecological Living for Change in Way of Life

This thesis brings overview for very important problem in modern time. The Way of Living is task for all people in this planet. It is very modern to talk about this theme but real impact of our really way of living is very often on the different way. The main goal of this thesis is very important and the study explained part of this globe problem. Author showed his knowledge and orientation in this subject. The work is in quite high level of quality and the time for writing was very short. Author knows a lot of important books as theoretical background and his aims and goals very successfully accomplished. The chapter Definition of terms and Review of Literature are compile sources very well. All thesis text is very good structured but the format is not so perfect yet /first pages, pagination, table of contents + pages, start of chapters at new page etc./. Also at the Figure 3 and Figure 5 could be the values in order by numbers but the diagrams helps to better understand. The results of thesis are very important specially with real open answers of participants.

I have some questions for author of thesis as answers I expect in examination time:

1) Do they exist relevant or similar studies? If yes, what are their results?
2) Author has written about sustainability versus sustainable development. Is it possible to illustrate this “versus” by results of thesis research?
3) How do farms and farming fit into this model of experience and the outdoors?
4) Is it possible to illustrate the results also by definition of ODE by Simon Priest – American approach?
5) What is the main value for people to live by standard “modern” life?
The thesis is finally very interesting and brings great overview of real problem in our everyday life.
I suggest that for better completing results could great to use interview with participants and also some answers from public. But this can be next steps for this topic.

Finally I recommend this thesis for examination.

Dusan Bartunek – thesis advisor

8th of May 2006 – Cervene Pecky – The Czech Republic

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