

Conservation Leadership CSS 481

Individual Project

Each student will create her/his own assignment for an individual research project. Two kinds of projects are permissible: 1) a detailed leadership profile of an environmentalist who exemplifies effective leadership; or 2) an environmental organizational profile.

Instructions: Choose an environmental leader, or organization. The focus can be a local organization or person (or an organization that you are familiar with from another location). Interview that person or a representative of that group. **Prepare a report of your subject. Present the report to the class (10 minutes), and submit your report in writing (3-5 pages). Presentations will be scheduled starting the first week of April, until they are all completed. Each student will sign up for a presentation date.** Sample questions for a leadership or organizational profile:

- What attracted you to [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE], and which projects have you been involved with through the group?
- How do you think the organization has changed since you arrived?
- What do you believe are [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE]'s most important accomplishments?
- How is the organization of [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] structured (e.g. role of members, staff, board of directors)?
- What role does your board of directors play in relation to your staff—that is, to what extent do they determine what the staff does on a day-to-day basis? Also, how have the fundamental changes in the nature of the group been determined? Who decided it was time to change the group's focus and move on, and who will make this decision in the future?
- Is [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] unique among environmental groups of its kind in its organizational structure? Also, how was this structure established at [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] in the first place and with what mindset (was it trying to emulate another group?), and how has it changed since you have been here?
- What are the primary bases of support for [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE]? How is work funded and otherwise supported? Are there any particular issues related to support that [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] has had to overcome?
- How does authority work within your organizational structure? How are important decisions made, and who is involved in making them (in the programs with which you have been involved from the beginning, who comes up with the ideas for what [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] should do next, and how do these ideas become reality? Does power really flow from board to CEO to staff, or does the real influence in the group flow more circuitously?
- How does the organization involve its supporters: members, volunteers, divisions, etc. Are programs and activities staff-dominated? Do members have a role beyond “check-writers”? How do [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE]'s leaders/staff characterize their role in involving others?
- What do you think are the greatest barriers and obstacles [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] has had to overcome, or circumvent, to get things done?
- How do the board and staff evaluate the organization, and measure success? How might you identify and respond to problems in one of your programs (e.g. problems having to do with the structure of the program as it tries to respond to obstacles to its success)?
- How does your staff deal with renewal? How do its leaders refresh, renew and regenerate, and prevent burnout?
- What is next for [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE]? Do you think the organization has reached a sort of equilibrium, or are there other ways to branch out? What other areas do you see [YOUR GROUP/ISSUE] becoming involved with in the next few years? And in light of any past transitions, do you think that the basic focus of the organization may change in the future, and how?