

# Introduction

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*The growth of green literature, products, movements, and ideologies has significantly increased over the past thirty years. That is as far as I got before asking myself, how do I really want to begin this book? I did not want another litany of environmental statistics. I did not want to use the tired rhetoric of doom and gloom. I did want to explain why this book was written as truthfully as I could in hopes it will be of use to present and future sport professionals (and anyone else) who might be reading or will read it. Thus, I decided I would simply tell you what motivated me to write this book and why I believe it to be an important resource for current and future sport professionals.*

## The Connection Between Sport and the Natural Environment

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Simply put, there is no way sport could *not* be a part of the environment. From the various fields of play to the need for parking and lighting, the environment is woven into sport. In fact, what is the argument for participation in sports? The ability to get out, move in the fresh air, and be a part of nature. Think Sunday afternoon baseball games

in the summer, the crisp autumn walk to a football game, or the quiet tranquility of a run through the park. In fact, the picture on the cover of the book was chosen because of the way it represents the relationship of sport and the environment. The runner on the beach, while enjoying the natural beauty of the surrounding shoreline coupled with the footprints left on the sand reflects the human connection with both sport and nature as well as the connections between sport and nature. No matter what we do (even a simple run), we have an impact, however minor, on the environment (a footprint). The extent to which this legacy is damaging, unalterable, and reversible, among other things, depends upon our actions.

## The Need for Action

For me, the environment (and the actions required to live in better harmony with it) is not a political issue; it is a human issue. What I mean by this is that, if we look at our individual impact on the environment, we can begin to see our total integration with and dependence on the natural world around us. An intake of breath, a drink of water, or the calming effect a warm sunny afternoon can have on us are all part of the natural world that we exist with and within. Utilizing the environment or environmental issues as a political tool exacerbates the differences in opinion as to how and what should be done to become more environmentally friendly.

In his book about values and the current state of the global economy, the chairman of HSBC, Stephen Green, argued we must:

Look at ourselves in the mirror and ask two questions about our role in the global bazaar: How is what I am doing contributing to human welfare? And why specifically am I doing it? (2010, 200)

Although the context of his questions deal with current debates about the future of capitalism and market ideologies, the same questions can be asked in relation to the environment. We all have a stake in this issue and the greater good must overcome petty, insincere motives. Indifference and apathy are equally troublesome. *Not wanting to change a lifestyle. A lack of time. There is no problem at all.* Even if the last statement were true, would it always be? The multiple levels of environmental concern have multiple causes and effects, some natural and others human.

“We are collectively enmeshed in activities that inexorably endanger the ecological niche that houses human life. The continued momentum from our past actions will unfold over decades or centuries; toxic chemicals that permeate our water and soil, and the buildup of greenhouse gases, will take their toll for years to come”

— (Goleman 2009, 9-10)

Although we are not at a point of no return, we are at an important point in history. So, hands in the air, what can one person possibly do? We do not think twice about contributing time and/or money to research programs seeking cures and treatments for diseases and illnesses. We feel comfortable calling for assistance if the food we ordered is not to our taste. We are never shy to raise a question about taxes. Why, then, do many people continue to hold the environmental issue at a distance, avoiding discussion of it as much as possible?

The term *environmentalist* is often at the heart of individual uncertainty of what to do or what are one's personal beliefs (Foss 2009; Suzuki 2007). I understand the personal reasons why people are environmentally aware or active. Many of these reasons are noble and laudable. However, who would really wish to be known as an anti-environmental activist? Taking time to identify your own belief system in relation to the environment, something we will discuss later in the book, is an important first step in one's journey towards an environmental purpose.

My own journey is in process. This book is a first step in articulating my perspective, but at the same time developing a pragmatic approach for sport managers to conduct green operations. This duality is due to the fact I want to help train future sport managers and to help current sport managers transform their operations into more environmentally friendly ones, but wish to refrain from inundating them with dogmatic environmentalist platitudes (although a few probably sneak into the book here and there).

I ask questions. One question I find myself constantly asking is, What actions can and should be taken by individuals, groups, organizations, corporations, and governments in relation to environmental issues? Hopefully, in developing answers to this question (and, most likely, more questions), I can identify myself in this process.

“Awareness of environmental issues may well lead people and policy-makers to pursue more sustainable types of behaviors and policies that will leave a smaller ecological footprint on the earth”

— (Steel and Warner 2007, 233)

## The Self in the Process

I use material goods, manmade and natural, like almost everyone else in the world. I love many forms of motorsport and the peacefulness that comes from a nice automobile trip in a warm day. I am not infallible as sometimes I fail to recycle. I am also a father who wants to make certain his daughter does not have to deal with a future hampered by various environmental barriers, both large and small, simply because of our present attitudes. I see the beauty of the trees around me and wonder what people losing their trees are thinking about when they think about their children's future. I have never hugged a tree, but I am glad they are around should the mood strike me. I am one person who is going to act and I want to do so alongside others.

“Each of us is quite literally created by air, water, soil, and sunlight, and what cleanses and renews these fundamental elements of life is the web of living things on the planet”

— (Suzuki 2007, 7)

## Taking Action

This book is part of the action. This book is not a doom-and-gloom call for change lest the world end tomorrow, nor is it a list of do's and don't's that tell people what they should do each minute of the day to become more ecologically aware. These types messages have been used for years, and I believe each is losing momentum in terms of public acceptance, engagement, and support.

My intention for this book is to seek an actionable middle way between prescription and damnation. I hope to assist in the existing and future efforts of sport professionals who are working to bring about environmental change (both incremental and substantial) in their lives, communities, and, if feeling particularly ambitious, the world in general. Short-term gains and glowing public recognition are not central to this purpose. Rather, an internal dialogue about oneself and one's needs is necessary to begin a true dialogue with each other. Each of us has questions to ask and to answer. What is important to us in life? What and who can help us achieve these goals? Are these goals commensurate with living well and living as one with others (and the environment)? An interconnected, interpersonal, multileveled, multitemporal focus is needed to read this book.

The past is a perspective, the present is just a moment, and the future is an expectation. What is required of us, across time, if we are to reclaim our *natural* position

within and with nature rather than finding ways to exist *alongside* it, or worse, *manage* it? Ideally, we would like to be able to maintain our current lifestyle and solve our environmental problems at the same time. This is not going to happen. Alterations to individual lifestyles are necessary; however, they vary by context. No one is immune from change when it comes to the environment. No one. As discussed earlier, each step taken in life has some level of impact on the environment. Every stroke of the computer keyboard I used to type this sentence, every picnic a young couple takes under the stars, every Saturday afternoon gathering for the washing of the family car, and, if I can quote the music group the Police, “Every breath you take” (Sumner 1983) impacts our world.

The environment is not an objective reality that can be bent to our will. Nature has shown us this time and again through horrific examples such as the devastating earthquakes in Haiti (2009) and Kobe, Japan (1995), the British Petroleum oil spill along the southern coast of the United States (2010), Hurricane Katrina in Florida (2005), or the tsunami that stretched from the coast of Africa throughout Southeast Asia (2005). These are examples of major disasters, but thousands of smaller, local disasters take place each year: mudslides, floods, fires. Then there are the micro-disasters that take place each day: throwing a soda can out of the car window, letting the paper blow across the street, throwing away untouched food. We will never control nature. We can learn to better live with and within it.

“Universality implies three fundamental characteristics: 1) the inclusion of all things and phenomena; 2) an all-embracing nature that transcends limits without exception; 3) being in existence or operation everywhere and under all conditions”

— (Plamintr 1994, 74)

## An Idea to Help

That is why I wrote this book. I want to begin to take action, although it is a realistic, measured action in terms of what, where, and how I will do it. I teach sport management for a living, I watch sport as a pastime, and I hope to help sport managers become leaders in the long trek towards a different human/environment relationship. The title of this book, *Sustainability in Sport: A Strategic Guide*, was chosen because sustainability implies an integrated, perpetual, fragile, and holistic effort to live with and within the environment that surrounds us. It also implies change of lifestyle, business practices, and life in general. *Sustainability* is a term used quite often, and it

has come to represent a number of different, sometimes contradictory, ideas (Prizzia 2007). While further discussion of this point occurs in Chapter 2, I will note now that sustainability and economic development are achieved only if current practices are changed. We can have material goods and a market economy, but a change in perspectives towards achieving or enacting them is needed. If our world is to avoid (maybe reverse) environmental degradation, we must change the ways we act with and within nature.

One purpose of this book is to help middle- and upper-level executives in the sport industry develop new career positions, cross-departmental teams, and strategies regarding green operations of sport organization staff and stadia. The approach taken to accomplish this is one of simplicity, proactivity, and customizability. The book will offer guidance for individuals or team/organizational personnel in relation to environmentally sound operations. It will also offer a strategic foundation for organizational/team personnel to begin the process of changing business operations or developing new ones in unique contexts. In other words, the book will be what you make it. No specialized knowledge is needed because the book is intended for sport managers who do not have a broad and deep green knowledge base. For those with modest or significant environmental knowledge and awareness, I hope to help you find ways of sharing and utilizing that knowledge for the betterment of your personal life and organization's operations. Persons with environmental knowledge and awareness in sport organizations are critical to the successful completion of many of the environmental tasks to come.

I also wrote this book with current sport management students in mind. Tired cliché or not, you are the future of the planet and of the sport industry. Shortly, you will be entering the sport profession and deal face-to-face with these issues. Each class you take has a link to the environment. No one has said that creating a successful sport organization runs counter to environmental stewardship. As you create marketing projects, financial budgets, sales promotions, facility-management schedules, recreation and parks strategies, and all of the other interesting work that occurs in the sport discipline, factor in the environmental impact of your decisions. I want to draw your attention to the special relationship between sport and society, with a special emphasis on understanding the need to balance these benefits with the need to retain proper and useful environmental practices. No one has a monopoly on good ideas, so your creative, energetic, and fresh approaches to sport and the environment are just as important to the discipline as those currently working in the industry.

“Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of the knowers”

— (Davenport and Prusak 1998, 5)

Individuals in the sport industry demand actionable and concise information, and this book aims to fill that need. In addition, the book can be adopted across a range of undergraduate and graduate courses to enhance strategic management, facility management, and marketing coursework by adding an environmental perspective to existing topics. Important unique features of this work include its relevance, now and in the future, its applied nature, and its sport industry focus. The well-documented *green movement* currently taking place in the world, and the United States in particular, will hopefully result in positive changes for business and personal living practices. This book is a how to book that does not provide nonactionable generalities, but departure points for individual creativity and contextual flexibility. By focusing on individuals and teams charged with implementing green initiatives (and those who will be in the future), this book aims to provoke thoughts and actions towards more sustainable sporting practices and provide guidance to those who seek change; it is customizable by the reader, grounded in sport practice, and adaptable to different levels of environmental actions deemed necessary by the team personnel. Finally, the sport industry can easily market itself as environmentally friendly, but to enact (and to sustain) real change requires changes to existing personal and business practices.

Sport holds a special place in cultures around the world. Why should sport, as a platform, and sport organizations and personnel, as change agents and environmental champions, not help (or even lead the way) to address environmental concerns? I sincerely hope as you read this book, you will reflect upon your life and the life we are leading as a society (and global community). I hope you will think of creative, even outlandish ways of addressing the various environmental concerns that face sport organizations. I hope you will change and help to change.

“Real change leaders do not care if the change effort is fast or slow, empowered or controlled, one-time or recurring, cultural or engineered—or all of the above. They only care that it is people intensive, and performance oriented”

— (Katzenbach, Beckett, Dichter, Feigen, Gagnon, Hope, and Ling 1995, 7)

## The Road Ahead

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The chapters in this book cover a variety of topics ranging from foundational knowledge to flexible, customizable strategy design, implementation, and evaluation tools. As noted earlier, these materials are the starting point because this book is meant to inspire flexible strategies tailored to contextual needs by sport managers.

Chapter 1 is a brief discussion of how we arrived at our current environmental situation here in the United States. It also examines current environmental practices from major sport organizations across the world as a way of preparing for the challenges ahead and learning about ways some sport teams have begun to address the environmental impact of their operations. Chapter 2 provides a guide to key environmental terms and concepts. While not exhaustive, this chapter will prepare you for the tasks ahead by introducing or refreshing your green vocabulary, exploring key legislative and governmental actions, and describing environmental processes (a bit of science). Understanding the context of environmental change requires an understanding of the language and concepts that shape it.

Chapter 3 moves the book into a new direction and begins the process of developing an environmental plan for sport organizations by discussing vision and mission elements of strategy development. Chapter 4 examines corporate policy development to make environmental plans a significant and useful part of the organization.

Chapter 5 focuses on the difficult task of organizing the elements of a sport organization into a unified and cohesive, yet flexible, team. Chapter 6 explores the world of environmental audits. The information gathered from the audits should direct an organization's environmental strategy.

Chapter 7 takes all of the previous information and begins the difficult, and contextual, task of implementing change. The chapter also examines benchmarking practices and discusses the will necessary to make change happen. Chapter 8 concludes the book by examining current trends and casting an eye to the future in order to understand the forces shaping future environmental issues and responses to them. While not guaranteed to come true, these ideas are meant to prompt further thinking of the future beyond tomorrow.

Each chapter will use examples from the world of sport (and beyond) to illustrate key points. At the end of each chapter is a set of questions designed to facilitate personal reflection on the issues at hand and begin the process of linking the information in this book with organizational situations and practices. There are also questions and worksheets in several chapters. Each chapter also provides a list of the references used in it. I encourage you to examine these materials as you build your knowledge base regarding environmental issues.

## Many Thanks

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Thank you for taking the time to read this book. Thank you also for taking the first step in making sport a little greener, the world a little better, and yourself a significant and important part of the planet's future. I hope at the end of the book's journey you will be closer to articulating your own thoughts and ideas about our environment and your place within it.