ALBERTA ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT: A PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

by Jacob Herrero

A Master's Degree Project
(Prepared in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Environmental Design,
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ABSTRACT

Alberta Environmental Alert: A Proposed Environmental Organization

Jacob B. Herrero
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Environmental Design (Environmental Science), in the Faculty of Environmental
Design, The University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Page

This Project proposes an environmental nongovernmental organization (ENGO)
for Alberta. The organization is called Alberta Environmental Alert or AEA. Its
mission is to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for
Albertans concerned about their environment. AEA would be a small, volunteer-
supported, grassroot organization. It is in part modeled on two successful social
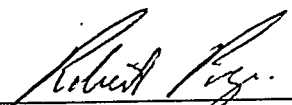change organizations, 20/20 Vision and Amnesty International.

Notable aspects of the organization include: (1) it fills a void, since no similar
organization exists in Alberta; (2) it presents an opportunity for ENGO
collaboration and cooperation by inviting other organizations to participate as
partner organizations; (3) it targets busy yet concerned individuals, offering them
a clear, easy to execute action component; (4) it uses a bulletin comprised of one-
page "action alerts" to inform concerned Albertans about important
environmental issues; (5) it employs unique, cost-effective distribution strategies
for its bulletin; (6) it recognizes an important, low-cost technological trend,
telecommunications, and positions itself to take advantage of this technology to
leverage its effectiveness; and, (7) it is a financially lean, self-supporting
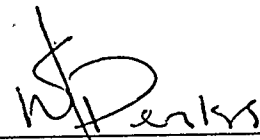organization that does not rely on external government or private funding for its
operation.

In addition to a detailed proposal, this Project includes: (1) discussion of the third
sector, NGOs, ENGOs and organizational design; (2) a situational analysis, the
conceptual and methodological core of strategic planning; and, (3) an action plan
which outlines steps necessary to bring this Project to fruition.

Key Words: Alberta Environmental Alert, environmental organization, third
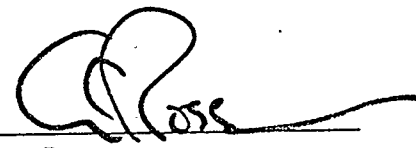sector, ENGO, NGO, situational analysis, organizational design, strategy.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Environmental Design for acceptance, a Master's Degree Project entitled **Alberta Environmental Alert: A Proposed Environmental Organization** submitted by Jacob Herrero in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design.

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Supervisor - Dr. Robert Page

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Prof. William T. Perks

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Prof. Michael P. Robinson

_____
Dr. Grant Ross

Date _May 2, 1994_

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

This project began in Japan. In the late eighties, I was living and working abroad, in a country where environmental issues seemed eclipsed by meteoric economic growth and heady prosperity. Japan's growth and prosperity were in part created by the herculean efforts of its people: twelve-hour days, six days a week appeared to be the normal work schedule. Those who stayed at home, the housewives, had daily schedules that seemed to be as rigorously planned and full as that of a head of state. Many Japanese people cared about their environment, but were so busy that participation in the environmental movement was difficult.

How could the average Japanese, who seemed busier than the busiest of Canadians, be encouraged to participate in the environmental movement when they had no time to participate? This question for me had qualities of a Zen koan (e.g., What is your face before your parent's birth?). Answers to koans come in unexpected ways and at unexpected times. While on a hike with a friend in Hakone, a mountainous area dotted with hotsprings a few hours from Tokyo, it struck me: design an environmental organization for busy people, one that made participation convenient, and one that acknowledged the fact that most Japanese had very little free time. I had heard of such an organization in the U.S., one that operated in the peace and disarmament arena and targeted busy people, offering them a well-conceived program that included a simple, easy to execute action component.

Half a year later I found myself back in Canada in graduate school. In the vortex of the moment, I was swept up by day-to-day demands of being a student, and the idea which presented itself in Japan faded. After a false start with another Master's Degree Project, also rooted in the third sector, the original idea hatched in Japan began to resurface slowly. But why not here in Alberta? Although the situation here was different, were there not also busy yet concerned people in Alberta who could benefit from a well-conceived environmental organization that made participation more convenient? These are the seeds from which this Project grew.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Project is situated within the *third sector*. Identified mainly by nongovernmental and not-for-profit organizations, this institutional sector plays an important role in democratic society (Boulding 1989; Drucker 1989; Friedmann 1989; Korten 1990; Cooperrider and Pasmore 1991; Elshtain 1993). While most people are familiar with the role of the first sector (institutions of government) and the second sector (institutions of business), few people it would seem are familiar with the role of the third sector. Drucker (1989, 197) observes that "...few people realize the size, let alone the importance of the third sector. In fact, few people are even aware of its existence."

For a long time, I, too, was only dimly aware of the existence and role of the third sector. Then in April of 1990, in an improbably tiny kiosk in Manila's domestic airport, I chanced to find a copy of David Korten's seminal work Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda[1] . Over the next months I read the book while, among other things, visiting rural health associations, local environmental groups, youth organizations, agricultural self-help groups, community development organizations, and other such volunteer-led, nongovernmental, not-for-profit organizations in the Philippines. Here was the third sector that Drucker spoke of. And here were the institutions and organizations that Korten felt were so important to society because of their role: providing important community services, serving as catalysts for societal change, demanding accountability of the first and the second sector, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation, and promoting active citizenship and social responsibility.

Within the third sector are found different types of organizations. Organizations which depend largely on the efforts of volunteers to carry out their mandate are known as *voluntary organizations*. In Alberta, we have many voluntary organizations: the Girl Guides, the Alberta Youth Hostel Association, the Salvation Army, Grassroots Calgary, and so on. Voluntary action is a key driving force for these organizations. What makes voluntary action unique is that it is values-led. In other words, it is action people engage in because they feel quite strongly about something—opportunities for youth, the disenfranchised, the environment, etc.

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[1] The Filipinos after ousting the dictatorship of Marcos through "People's Power" yearned to explore the possibilities of democratic society. Korten is an articulate and convincing spokesperson on the appropriate role of first, second and third sector institutions and organizations in authentic democratic societies.

Voluntary action plays a central role in creating social and institutional change (Korten, 1990). In so far as the move toward a more sustainable society involves creating social and institutional change, voluntary organizations have an important role to play.

Most environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs) are voluntary organizations. These organizations have served as important catalysts for creating social and institutional change in Canada—the establishment of recycling programs, the drafting of environmental legislation, the development of environmental ethics, etc. Values-driven, voluntary action is critical to these organizations. It has helped them to create one of the most important social movements of this century, the environmental movement. Freeman (Young 1991, 927) observes that "the most viable movement is one which several organizations can play different roles and pursue different strategic possibilities." A myriad of ENGOs supported by a strong values orientation have played different roles and have pursued different strategic possibilities, helping to make the environmental movement successful.

This Project proposes an ENGO for Alberta. It would play a role different from other Alberta ENGOs by serving as a bridging organization. Brought together would be a group of Alberta ENGOs and the interested Alberta public in an organization called Alberta Environmental Alert. AEA would pursue a new strategic possibility by partnering with existing Alberta ENGOs to make environmental advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment.

1.2 The Project

As stated in my Master's Degree Project proposal, the primary objective of this Project was to design an innovative ENGO in Alberta whose goal is to foster public interest and participation in environmental decision-making through education and peaceful, effective action such as letter-writing. I committed myself to producing background research and plans for a well-conceived, implementable environmental organization for Alberta.

The process by which the objective and the output were realized was somewhat evolutionary. The steps listed below show how the Project took form; they also introduce its main methodologies. More detailed information on methodologies employed is presented in the relevant chapter introductions.

Step 1   Conducted an initial literature review that focused on: (1) state of the world's environment, and policies, programs and initiatives intended to guide humanity toward a more sustainable future; (2) the third sector (civil society); (3) NGOs; (4) ENGOs; and, (5) organizational design.

Step 2   Drafted Chapter 2, **Foundations of the Project,** which represents a synthesis of the above literature review. Circulated this among the three members of my MDP Supervisory Committee.

Step 3   Drafted Chapter 3, **The Proposed Organization,** which reflects both knowledge acquired through the Step 1 literature review and my past experience with third sector organizations. Circulated this among my Supervisory Committee.

Step 4   Met with six individuals regarding the proposed organization, three of whom had worked with environmental NGOs in Alberta, and solicited their response to the proposed organization.

Step 5   Conducted a literature review for Chapter 4, **Situational Analysis,** and then commenced the analysis. This analysis served to assess and program the strategies proposed in Chapter 3. Circulated Chapter 4 among the Committee.

Step 6   Conducted a literature review for Chapter 5, **Action Plan,** drafted that chapter, and submitted it to my MDP supervisor for feedback.

Step 7   Revised Chapter 2, guided by Committee feedback and new insights acquired in the interim; revised Chapter 3, guided by (1) Committee feedback, (2) the interviews mentioned in Step 4, and (3) the results of the situational analysis in Step 5; revised Chapter 4, making minor edits for readability; and, last, revised Chapter 5 based on Committee feedback and new insights gained in the time lapsed since it was first drafted.

Step 8   Drafted the Introduction and Conclusion. Along with the revised body of the document described in Step 7, these were circulated among the Committee.

Step 9   Completed final revision of the MDP document.

As the Project progressed and feedback was offered and new knowledge was gleaned, the Project began to take on an identity of its own. It began to develop in ways that I myself could not have realized working in isolation; the insights of other people are very evident in this Project. Also, frequent and often long periods away from this Project over its two and half year life served as an opportunity to let it mature. It was also an opportunity for me to affirm my commitment to, and interest in, the Project.

1.3 Document Outline

Chapter 2 establishes the intellectual and conceptual foundations on which this Project rests. It begins with the general and proceeds toward the specific. In the first section of the chapter agents of societal change are discussed along with the institutional sectors of our society and their respective power bases; its main focus is the third sector. The second section defines and describes ENGOs, who they are and what they do. Here, I develop an ENGO typology that allows the proposed organization to be understood more clearly. Last, a brief overview of organizational design in the context of this Project is presented. Much of the emphasis is on strategy, a key dimension of organizational design.

I wrote Chapter 2 for the individuals and organizations who might be interested in participating in the proposed organization. I also wrote it for anyone interested in better understanding ENGOs and the wellspring from which they originate, the third sector.

Chapter 3 introduces the proposed organization, AEA. It reads as a proposal. Individuals and organizations interested in participating would read this chapter to find out who AEA is, what the organization would do, who it would serve, and how it would operate. Hence, it represents a general prospectus for consultation and enlistment.

Chapter 4 presents a situational analysis, the conceptual and methodological core of strategic planning. The situational analysis looks at conditions (political, social, economic, etc.) in AEA's external environment and relates these to the proposed organization in terms of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses. This serves to assess and program AEA's strategic position. The analysis helped to shape and modify my initial thinking about the AEA, and in turn to conclude my designing of the organization in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 is an action plan. It speaks to the process through which AEA will come to be; it is divided in two phases. When the actions of Chapter 5 are carried out and completed, AEA should then be a fully-functioning organization.

Chapter 6 summarizes the more significant parts of this document. It also affords me an opportunity to reflect upon the Project and whether its primary objective was realized.

2. FOUNDATION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Agents of Societal Change

Implicit in the move toward a more sustainable society is societal change. Government, business, and the third sector represent three distinct power bases in our society, and as power bases, three potential agents of societal change (Nerfin 1986; Boulding 1989; Korten 1990). Nerfin presents us with a clever and useful analogy for better comprehending these three power bases of society: government as the **Prince**, business as the **Merchant**, and the **Citizen** or the third sector as distinctly different from the other two. Nerfin's analogy, combined with the insights of Boulding and Korten, offer a powerful and engaging conceptual tool for better understanding the three power bases, especially the power base which underlies the third sector.

Prince

The Prince represents governmental power. Organizations of the Prince, like most organizations of the Merchant and the Citizen, are third-party organizations; that is, they serve those outside the organization. The resources necessary for the Prince to function are acquired principally through legal coercive means (e.g., taxation). This is also the primary means by which the Prince affects societal change (e.g., laws and regulations). Clearly, the Prince is politically-oriented and motivated. Among the Prince's important responsibilities are maintenance of public order and security. Additional distinguishing and defining characteristics of the Prince include: (1) a tendency to become large, slow to change and bureaucratic; (2) most responsive to those groups and individuals who possess political leverage; (3) ability to reallocate resources and wealth in society; and, (4) a tendency, if compared to the other two sectors, to use resources inefficiently.

Merchant

The Merchant represents economic power. Resources necessary for it to function are principally procured through exchange. Unlike the Prince who is politically-oriented, the Merchant is market-oriented in ideology and approach. Exchange and capital formation form its primary vehicle for affecting societal change. The Merchant plays a crucial role in our society: the provision of goods and services essential for functioning of society. The Merchant caters to those in society who possess the money to purchase goods and services; served are its customers. In contrast to the Prince, who has a tendency to use resources inefficiently, the Merchant has the opposite tendency: it uses resources efficiently providing there is good financial

incentive (i.e., profit) to do so. Last, the Merchant serves as the main locomotive for the creation of wealth and jobs in our society.

Citizen

The Citizen represents citizens' or people's power. In other words, it represents the power which is not articulated in the structures of formal government or the market-driven economy. Most of the resources necessary for the Citizen sector to function are generally neither acquired through legal coercion (the Prince's means) nor exchange (the Merchant's means); instead, resources are principally acquired through non-coercive means such as donation or membership fees. The Citizen is values-oriented; that is, morals and ethics are its main motivation and vehicle for affecting societal change.

The Citizen is of critical importance to the functioning of society because it demands accountability of the Prince and the Merchant. The Citizen often uses nongovernmental and not-for-profit organizations as its institutional vehicles. Whereas the Prince serves its constituency and the Merchant its customers, the Citizen serves a variety of entities—the poor, the sick, God, the community, the environment, youth, its membership, and so on. Though the objective of the Citizen is often to exert political pressure, it works outside the formal political structures of society. Finally, the Citizen has historically demonstrated the ability to use acquired resources efficiently and has strong potential for social and institutional innovation because of this sector's independence and values-orientation (Korten, 1990).

In Three Faces of Power (1989), Boulding presents ideas quite similar to those of Nerfin, but instead of using a clever analogy he uses a simple chart to set out three institutional categories of power in society: (1) political-military, (2) economic and (3) social. These correspond with Nerfin's Prince, Merchant and Citizen. Within each category Boulding suggests that there are corresponding characteristic *types of behavior*; namely, threat, exchange and love. Each of the three categories can also be distinguished according to how organizations within the category acquire resources: coercion, exchange or shared values (Korten, 1989). Figure 1 is an adaptation of the original diagram which Boulding devised to illustrate and illuminate these ideas. I have provided a few specific examples of Canadian institutions and organizations that lie within each category.

Institutional Category	Primary means by which resources are acquired and change initiated			Examples
Political-Military (First sector–government)	Coercion		Exchange / Shared Values	Institutions of national, provincial and local governments including: •Revenue Canada •Alberta Environment •Calgary City Police
Economic (Second sector–business)	Coercion	Exchange	Shared Values	The business sector including: •Safeway Canada •Husky Oil •Molson Breweries •Joe's Corner Grocery
Social (Third sector–citizen)	Coercion / Exchange	Shared Values		Vast and varied range of organizations including: •Red Cross •Girl Guides •Greenpeace •Anglican Church

Figure 1. Institutional sectors of society and means of resource acquisition. (Adapted from Boulding 1989, 30)

The relative portions of what are labeled "coercion", "exchange" and "shared values" within each institutional category vary. Some governments are founded entirely on coercion, as are some third sector organizations such as extreme religious groups. Some third sector organizations which are NGOs are highly market-driven, business-like entities who pursue contracts aggressively. And some businesses have very distinct social missions[1]. Limitations and exceptions aside, the diagram in a graphic rather than a written manner communicates well two important concepts. First, that three main institutional categories exist in our society and, second, that organizations within these categories are defined and differentiated to a large extent by specific characteristics such as the means by which they acquire resources.[2]

2.1.1 Focusing on the Third Sector

While all three sectors are essential to the functioning of society, with regard to societal change, the third sector (as represented in Nerfin's schema by the Citizen) plays a pivotal role because of its values-orientation (Korten, 1989). Values or ethics can be thought of as notions of what is right and what is wrong. They form the essential foundation for individual and collective action. The ethic of sustainability which is called for in <u>A Strategy for</u>

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[1]Two examples of such businesses are the Body Shop and Patagonia.

[2]Korten (1989) identifies a fourth sector that integrates the attributes of the other three sectors. However, for the purpose of this rather brief discussion, it is considered as a sub-class of the third sector.

<u>Sustainable Living</u> (1991) speaks of what is right and wrong in the context of sustainability, and embraces such values as equity, fairness and justice.

Tens of thousands of third sector organizations worldwide, ranging from village advocacy groups in rural India to worldwide citizen organizations like Friends of the Earth, have embraced many of these types of values. They deserve considerable credit for initiating much of the dialogue and action during the last decade in the area of environment and development. Shared values are central to these organizations. Though they command limited resources when compared to government and business, they have achieved remarkable results primarily because they believe quite strongly in what they do.

Governments, businesses, and indeed other third sector organizations often respond to the initiatives generated in the third sector. A good example is the Endangered Spaces Campaign here in Canada, an initiative of the World Wildlife Fund, Canada, in partnership with other ENGOs. As a result of the initiative, all but two of Canada's provincial and territorial governments have agreed to a goal of setting aside at least 12% of their land base for nonexploitive purposes that promote conservation[3].

The third sector is responsible for articulating much of the public's demand for societal change towards sustainability. Paehlke (pers. comm. 1993) notes that environmental values, which underlie much new governmental and corporate environmental policy, programs and initiatives, are generated by organizations of the third sector which comprise the environmental movement. Values-driven change is a key aspect which distinguishes this sector from the other two. [4]

Third sector institutions and organizations continue to grow worldwide. The precise extent of growth is very difficult to determine, for the information available is scant. This lament is echoed by others. [5] (Cooperrider and Pasmore, 1991; Durning, 1989; Korten, 1989). Durning (1989, 10) in Worldwatch Paper 88, <u>Action at the Grassroots: Fighting Poverty and Environmental Decline</u>, presents hard-to-come-by data which hints at the extent and growth of third sector-type organizations in selected countries of

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[3]The 12% target was set by the Bruntland Commission in their 1987 report <u>Our Common Future</u>.
[4]This is not to imply that the first and second sectors are without values, but rather to note that in the third sector, value-laden ideals and actions are the driving force.
[5]The reason for this is quite simple: research and information tend to follow money, and there has been very little money sloshing around in the third sector compared to the first and second sector.

the South. (Unfortunately no similar data appears for countries of the North.[6])

Brazil	1,200 independent development organizations formed since democratization in early eighties: 100,000 Christian based Communities with 3 million members; 1,300 neighborhood associations in Sao Paulo; landless peasant groups proliferating; 1,041 independent development organizations.
India	Strong Gandhian self-help tradition promotes social welfare, appropriate technology, and tree planting; local groups number in at least the tens of thousands, independent development organizations estimated at 12,000.
Indonesia	600 independent development groups work in environmental protection alone; peasant irrigation groups multiplying.
Kenya	16,232 women's groups with 637,000 members registered in 1984, quadruple the 1980 number (1988 estimates range up to 25,000); many start as savings clubs.
Sri Lanka	Rapidly growing Sarvodaya Shramadana village awakening movement includes over 8,000 villages, one-third of total in country; 3 million people involved in range of efforts, particularly work parties, education, preventive health care, and cooperative crafts projects.

The growth and size of the third sector in the South is no less than staggering.[7] In fact, it appears that in some countries of the South—if governments are measured by how well they represent the aspirations of their people and their ability to deliver services and allocate resources which are essential for the functioning of society—the de facto governments are the vast lattice of institutions and organizations which lie firmly within the third sector. Another observation is that in the South, third sector organizations are expanding rapidly, because that is where social, environmental, economic and political problems are most acute, especially for the least privileged members of society who often receive little attention from either government or business.

Some countries of the North have also witnessed a phenomenal growth of third sector organizations. Drucker (1989, 199) observes that:

> The third sector has also grown fast, especially in the last ten or fifteen years. Indeed, during the eighties it has been the fastest-growing part of American society. And equally noteworthy is the way this growth has come about: it is growth in effectiveness as much as it is in size.

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[6]The challenge of compiling such data is further compounded by the fact that much of the third sector is highly fluid and therefore difficult to study.

[7]Some of the organizations listed probably lie within the fourth sector, but because of their values-orientation I have elected to consider them as third sector organizations.

Drucker (ibid) indicates that one out of every two adult Americans work as volunteers in the third sector. These people do important work. Because much of this work is not politically expedient nor financially profitable (e.g., helping homeless people), the first and second sector usually avoid it. If they were paid, these volunteers would collect wages totaling $150 billion a year (ibid, 197). Yet neither the workforce nor the output of the third sector shows up statistics.

Many third sector organizations operate in more than one country: some span North-South and East-West. The two following examples speak of the scale of such global organizations when viewed as a composite.

> The rise of international non-government organizations has been spectacular, from a mere handful in the nineteenth century to over 18,000 today. These cover virtually all fields of human life—science, religion, politics, sport. This is perhaps one of the most spectacular developments of the twentieth century, although it has happened so quietly that it is seldom noticed (Boulding 1989, 244).

> Never before has the world been witness to so many attempts by individuals and transnational organizations to combat age-old social ills such as hunger, poverty, disease, lack of education, human rights abuses, armed conflict, and environmental degradation. The 1990's will be known as the decade of global social innovation, and whoever chronicles that decade will see clearly what we only perceive only dimly now (Cooperrider and Pasmore 1991, 1037).

The Cooperrider and Pasmore quote is from their article "Global Social Change: A New Agenda for Social Science". It reads as an academic wake up call, noting that an entire institutional sector of society, one that is quietly reshaping the world, has been overlooked by much of the social science research community.

2.2 Environmental NGOs: Who they are and what they do

The institutions and organizations of the third sector are active in different arenas in society: community development, foreign aid, health, education, the environment, and many more. NGOs active in the environmental arena are analyzed in this section. This background is provided because the main objective of this Project is to design a small ENGO and it is important to know where it would be located on a complex institutional and organizational landscape.

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Most—but not all—environmental NGOs (ENGOs)[8] are located firmly within the third sector. In Canada, such organizations as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society are examples of well-known ENGOs. Also important but less well-known are smaller ENGOs with names such as Grassroots Calgary and the Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition. Canada has approximately 1,800 ENGOs (Bregha, 1992). It is important to be able discern at a basic level the similarities and differences of these organizations. But first we must begin by considering NGOs in general, since ENGOs are a specific subset of nongovernmental organizations—NGOs are the trunk and ENGOs are one branch extending from it.

Much ambiguity and misunderstanding is associated with the NGO label. Although "NGO" has become part of most people's lexicon, it is odd that these organizations are identified according to who they are not, rather than who they are. The following three quotations aid in better understanding who NGOs are and what they do.

> Non-profit, non-business, non-governmental are all negatives. One cannot, however, define anything by what it is not. What, then, is it that all these institutions do? They all have in common—and this is a recent realization— that their purpose is to change human beings (Drucker 1989, 198).

> While NGOs are active in many different pursuits, they share certain characteristics that define them as NGOs. First and foremost, they are nonprofit, privately run institutions. Many are motivated or guided by a particular religion, ideology, or world view. Though practices diverge widely from country to country, most NGOs operate independently of the host government but with its approval and sometime cooperation...While many receive government funding, especially in the form of subcontracts to carry out official foreign aid commitments, most NGOs depend financially on voluntary contributions (Bauer and Drabek 1988, cited in Cooperrider and Pasmore 1991, 1048).

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[8]For the purpose of this discussion, *environmental non-government organization* and *environmental organization* can be used interchangeably as can *non-government* and *not-for-profit organization.*

...as a body of individuals who associate for any of three proposes: (1) to perform public tasks that have been delegated to them by state; (2) to perform public tasks for which there is demand that neither the state nor for-profit organizations are willing to fulfill; or (3) to influence the direction of policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other nonprofit organizations (Hall 1987, cited in Young 1991, 923).

The last two definitions complement each other well, the first focusing more on specific characteristics, and the second focusing more on operational attributes.

In his book <u>Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda,</u> Korten maintains that serious discussion of the role of NGOs in societal change is difficult without distinguishing between different types because they are so dissimilar. For this reason Korten identifies four different types of NGOs.

Voluntary Organizations (VOs)

These are NGOs which pursue a social mission. They are driven by shared values. Most rely heavily upon inputs by volunteers. Many environmental organizations and international development organizations are NGOs which are VOs. Here we can think of such organizations as Tools for Peace, Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International. They exist to achieve a specific social mission such as preservation of wildlands, education for Third World rural poor, the prohibition of harmful pollutants, and so on. Shared values are their modus operandi.

Public Service Contractors (PSCs)

These NGOs function as market-oriented, nonprofit businesses serving public purposes. PSCs are much more market-oriented than VOs. PSCs are more likely than VOs to "follow money"; that is, reorient themselves in accordance to available funding. Hence, it can be argued that they are less driven than VOs by a specific social mission since funding often determines what these organizations focus on. This is not to suggest that they are any less worthy as NGOs, only that the driving force behind them is different. Here we can think of a research and policy institute such as the Rawson Academy.

People's Organizations (POs)

POs are NGOs which represent their members' interests, have member accountable leadership, and are substantially self-reliant. These NGOs differ from the other three in that they exist primarily to serve their own members. POs normally do not depend on outside funding to carry out their mission. In Canada, POs generally serve consumers (e.g., Mountain Equipment Coop).

Governmental Nongovernmental Organizations (GONGOs)

GONGOs are creations of governments. They generally serve as instruments of government policy. In essence, they are the Prince dressed up in NGO clothes. Whereas the other three types of NGOs are at arms length to government, GONGOs are very close. Because their funding is often tied to the execution of specific government policy, the mandates of these organizations are largely externally controlled. Some countries of the South have established GONGOs as a means of accessing aid made available only to nongovernmental organizations (Korten, 1989). While Canada does not appear to have many GONGOs, a possible example is CUSO, Canadian University Students Overseas.

In Section 2.2, institutional sectors of society were discussed in detail. It was established that each of the three sectors has defining characteristics and behaviors. Each type of NGO discussed above can now be tagged with the different institutional sectors of society it most closely resembles, as illustrated in Figure 2.
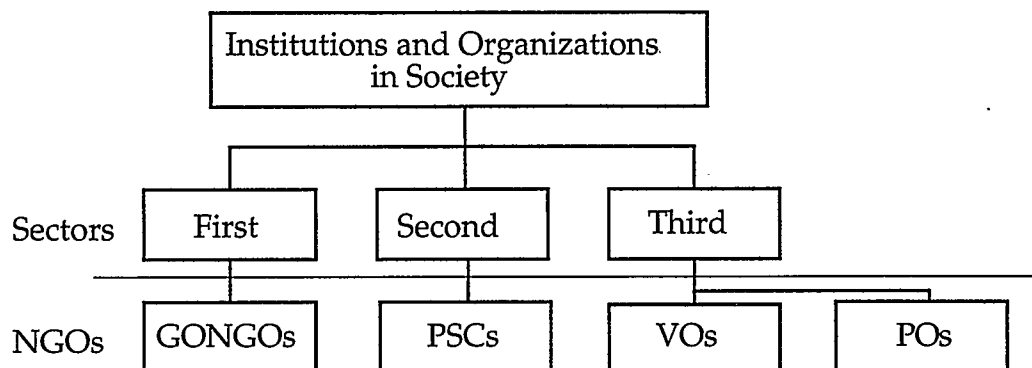
Figure 2. Institutions and organizations in society: sectoral and NGO levels. (GONGO: governmental nongovernmental organization; PSC: public service contractor; VO: voluntary organization; PO: people's organization)

Hence, because a GONGO is closely tied to government for both funding and mandate, it is tagged to the first sector. PSCs are more market-oriented; they more closely resemble the second sector. Finally, VOs and POs, with their values-orientation are tagged to the third Sector. I feel that this "tagging" exercise is useful because it establishes a conceptual base map of the NGO community, and more important to this Project, an excellent departure point for the discussion of the ENGO community.

While definitions for NGOs do exist, one would appear not to exist for ENGOs. Obviously, ENGOs by logical extension are simply NGOs with an environmental mandate, but nevertheless I purpose the following as an

initial attempt to better define what ENGOs are. The proposed definition represents a synthesis of ideas regarding the third sector, NGOs and the environment.

> ENGOs are organizations that are located outside the formal structures of the state, acquire resources through non-coercive means (membership contributions, donations, public and private grants, etc.), are not motivated primarily by financial gain, have a mandate of environmental change and/or research and have freely associating members who have common interests and shared values.

As mentioned earlier, there are over 1800 ENGOs in Canada. At a very basic level, Korten's NGO classification system[9] can help to partially untangle the ENGO gordian knot. First, most all ENGOs, at least in Canada, are NGOs which are **VOs**. They are ENGOs driven by shared values in pursuit of an environmental mission or goal. The few exceptions are ENGOs which behave more like business entities, and hence can be classified as **PSCs**; they, however, are a clear minority. I am unaware of any ENGOs in Canada which would be considered either true **POs** or **GONGOs**, according to Korten's system.

The end result of applying Korten's classification system is that a massive number of divergent ENGOs (e.g., Sierra Legal Defense Fund, Nature Canada, EarthFirst!, Grassroots Calgary) all get lumped together as voluntary organizations, or what I will refer to henceforth as **ENGO-VOs**. This presents a problem. Clearly, meaningful discussions about ENGOs requires further classification; otherwise one is unable to distinguish between two ENGO-VOs such as Earth First!, who has been accused of using radical terrorist-type tactics to achieve their goals, and Nature Canada, a rather tame, mainstream group of nature lovers. Both, however, are ENGO-VOs.

I encountered three previous attempts to classify ENGOs. Bregha (1992), in an draft paper about ENGOs in Canada, suggests three broad categories based on philosophical orientation: (1) the conservation of natural resources, (2) environmental protection, and (3) the re-alignment of humanity's place in nature. Bregha does not differentiate between those which behave more like governmental and business entities and those that behave more like citizen or voluntary entities; I, however, feel this distinction is of fundamental importance.

Hays (1987) seems to suggest that environmental organizations fall into three main groupings: those concerned with beauty (e.g., clearcutting); those concerned with health (e.g., toxic waste dumps); and those concerned with

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[9]In Korten's book it is a little unclear whether this is actually his own classification system or if was developed by another person or persons.

permanence (e.g., protection of natural area). Unfortunately, other than casually noting the groupings, he does not elaborate.

Wallis (1992) in an attempt to map out environmental organizations for business interests in California uses the following labels: conservationists, legalists, grassroots, eco-philosophers and local citizens.

I propose a typology for ENGO-VOs that incorporates and builds on some of the ideas and labels of both of Bregha and Wallis, but also includes new ones as well. Accordingly, there are six types of ENGO-VOs, reflecting more an organization's strategy, tactics and actions, and less an organization's philosophical orientation, as Bregha forwarded. They are establishment, research, legalists, locale-based, grassroots-network and radicals.

Establishment ENGO-VOs

Most Establishment ENGO-VOs have a large membership base and focus on nature conservation. Many American organizations such as the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, and the National Wildlife Federation fit this mold. In Canada, we have the "Group of 8" (Canadian Wildlife Federation, World Wildlife Fund (Canada), Canadian Nature Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, Canadian Parks and Wildness Society, and Nature Conservancy Canada) .

This group of organizations commands considerable resources. America's National Wildlife Federation, for example, in 1990 had an annual budget of $100 million U.S. dollars (Economist, 1990); the "Group of 8" in 1991 had a combined budget of $70 million Canadian dollars (Bregha, 1992). Most establishment ENGO-VOs are willing to sit down and work with business and government to resolve environmental issues. But they are not push overs, and most employ well-schooled professionals to further their cause. Other general characteristics of this group include that they: (1) often receive government and/or corporate funding, (2) have formal boards and institutional structures, (3) command or have quick access to sound technical advice, (4) take relatively moderate positions on issues, (5) are willing to consider partnerships with government and business, and (6) when called upon, can engage in very sophisticated lobbying and media campaigns.

Research ENGO-VOs

Research ENGOs share some characteristics with Establishment ENGO-VOs: they are staffed by well-schooled professionals, receive funding from government and business, and have access to scientific and technical resources, including academic institutions. As their name implies, research is their primary mandate, and hence unlike the other types of ENGO-VOs, do

not normally engage in advocacy. A typical Research ENGO generally has a small general membership base, a market orientation with regards to funding (as compared to other ENGO-VOs), and a low pubic profile.

Legalist ENGO-VOs

This type of ENGO-VO uses the courts and legal system to achieve its goals. Legalist ENGOs in the US, such as the Sierra Legal Defense Fund, have played an important role in US environmental movement, challenging both government and business in the courts to affect environmental change. As would be expected, these organizations are staffed by lawyers, some who volunteer their services. While the Sierra Legal Defense Fund and other Legalist ENGO-VOs do exist and operate in Canada, they are generally less effective and visible here due to our different legal system (e.g., the absence of class-action suits). Though the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society is not a true Legalist ENGO-VO, it at times wears this hat, using the courts to try to achieve environmental objectives (e.g., halting logging in Wood Buffalo National Park and now (1994) trying to prevent the expansion of Sunshine Ski Area in Banff National Park.)

Locale-based ENGO-VOs

Locale-based or community-based ENGOs generally restrict their activities and initiatives to specific local areas. These organizations often form to rally around a single issue and are then disbanded when the objective is achieved. Other general characteristics include: (1) advocacy orientation, (2) act in isolation, (3) have no paid staff, (4) have few formal organizational structures, and (5), rely on other types of ENGOs for additional support and expertise.

Grassroot-Network ENGO-VOs

This type of organization consists of networks or coalitions of private individuals or small groups. These NGO-VOs depend almost entirely upon voluntary inputs to function, and command limited resources, at least at the local level. While Grassroot-Network ENGO-VOs generally have no paid staff, when linked together to form a larger organization, they may be able to support paid staff. (Later in this chapter, the Rainforest Action Group, a good example of a Grassroot-Network ENGO-VO, is described.) Embodied within Grassroot-Network ENGO-VOs are notions of citizen empowerment; that is, common citizens taking action to affect societal change. These organizations generally (1) receive little government or business funding, (2) use simple tactics such as letter campaigns and petitions, and (3) advocate involvement and action at the local level.

Radical ENGO-VOs

The sixth and final type of ENGO-VO which I propose is the radical type. They are generally small, receive no government or business support, strongly challenge the status-quo, and use civil disobedience and other forms of direct action (e.g., monkey wrenching) to achieve their goals—members are not afraid to go to jail. Of all the ENGO-VOs, they are the least willing to enter into dialogue with government, business or other ENGOs. Because of their action-oriented and controversial tactics, they often capture significant media attention. Two good examples of radical ENGO-VOs are EarthFirst! founded by Dave Foreman and the Sea Shepherds, founded by Canadian environmentalist Paul Watson.

Some ENGO-VOs may go through a sort of typological metamorphosis. The Sierra Club, U.S., for example, started out as a **locale-based** ENGO-VO in 1892 whose main purpose was to preserve Hetch Hetchy Valley in California from flooding as a result of dam construction. (The Hetch Hetchy Valley was said to be equal in grandeur to famous Yosemite Valley. Hetch Hetchy was flooded despite the Sierra Club's efforts.) Later, they evolved into a **grassroot-network** ENGO-VO with chapters in other states. For a portion of the 1960s, they frequently used civil disobedience in pursuit of specific conservation goals, and it was not unusual at that time for Sierra Club members to be arrested. Hence, for a while the Club behaved more like a **radical** ENGO-VO. Then in the 1970s, the Sierra Club spawned a **legalist** ENGO-VO which has been active in challenging "environmentally-irresponsible" government legislation and business practices, and operates under the name of the Sierra Legal Defense Fund.

The Sierra Club is now considered by many to be clearly a member of the "green establishment" or Establishment ENGO-VO category. But it is important to note that its various local chapters have substantial autonomy. For an ENGO-VO, the evolution of the Sierra Club is unusual, but it is by no means entirely unique.

A close examination of ENGO-VOs reveals tremendous variety and diversity. This is one reason why the environmental movement has been so successful. Freeman (cited in Young, 1991, 927) notes "... the most viable movement is one in which several organizations can play different roles and pursue different strategic possibilities." This indeed has been the case with the environmental movement.

It is now possible to present a "map" which accurately locates the organization I propose in this project.

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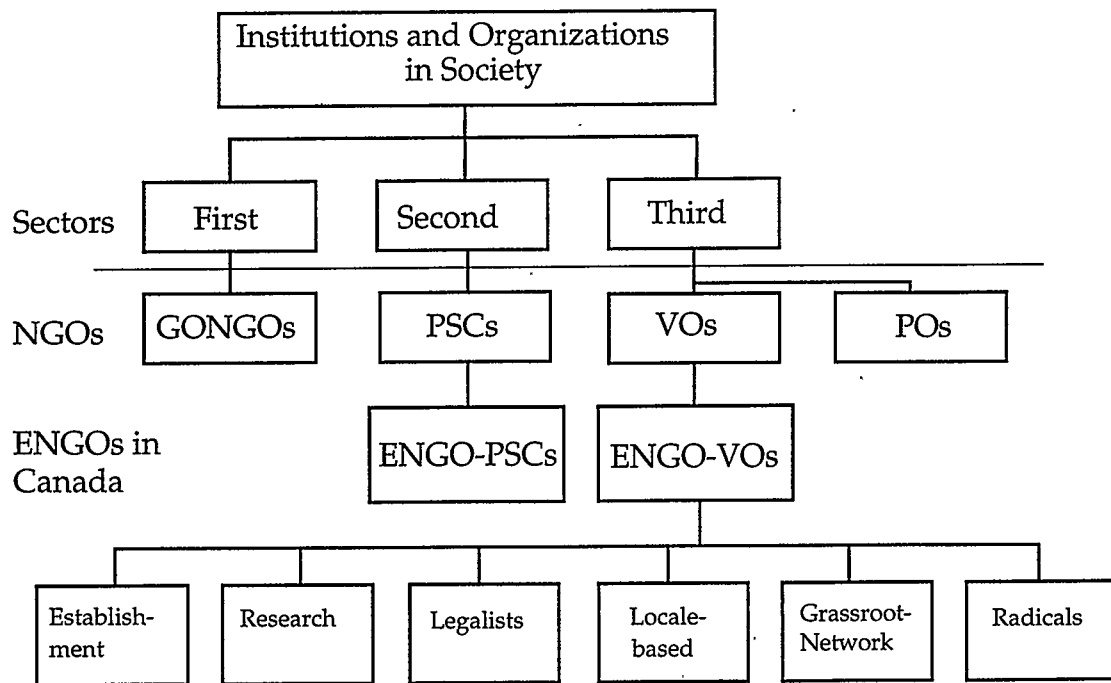
Figure 3. A conceptual map of the institutional sectors of society, the NGO community and ENGO-VOs.

In Figure 3, the organization I propose is a Grassroot-Network ENGO-VO. Like other ENGO-VOs it would be firmly rooted in the third sector and depend on the efforts of volunteers to carry out its mandate. Modeled in part on Amnesty International, it would consist of a loosely structured network of citizen-volunteers using a prescribed set of simple actions such as letter writing in an effort to affect social change. I believe the social-organizational design of these types of organizations and the strategies and tactics they employ would be appropriate for the organization I envision. Different than other citizen-led advocacy organizations, however, the proposed organization would also serve as a bridging organization. Brought together would be Albertans concerned about their environment and a group of Alberta ENGO-VOs interested in reaching a wider constituency. (Details of the organization are presented in Chapter 3.)

2.3 Organizations by Design

Most ENGO-VOs do not have the luxury of studying organizational design. Often they spring to life in the heat of the moment to address pressing environmental problems (e.g., chronic air pollution, industrial expansion, logging in watersheds, mega-development proposals, etc.). Organizational structures, goals, strategies and action evolve as the organization—and the issues it faces—evolves. This Project is different in that there exists an opportunity to take time and reflect upon a few of the important elements of organizational design. At the same time, it still comes from a traditional ENGO-VO values-orientation. This is my personal commitment to sustainable living and environments. What follows is a discussion of organizational design and how it relates to ENGO-VOs, using a tripartite framework (new environments, new technical systems and new strategies) developed by Powers, an American organizational theorist. Much of the emphasis is on strategy, a dimension of organizational design which ENGO-VOs can be expected to have considerable control over.

It should be noted, there exists an extreme bias in organizational design literature. Focused on are organizations of the first and second sector, particularly the second. As Cooperrider and Pasmore (1991, 766) observe, "Organizational scholars have tended to study large bureaucracies of governance and profit-making firms because they are convenient and remuneration is readily available in many instances for doing so." Moreover, the vocabulary and language of the organizational design field suggests a second sector bent, whereby all people are viewed as consumers and all organizations as for-profit corporations.

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Successful organizational designs change constantly. In 1982 Peters and Waterman, now famous, released In Search of Excellence. A decade has since passed, the book has become the most widely-read document on organizational management ever. Now, some of the book's model organizations are beginning to look rather pale. "Peters and Waterman (1982)", notes Hage (1988, 1) "look at large, corporations, many of which have started to experience major difficulties...(w)hat worked yesterday may well be outmoded today, depending upon the directions that future society takes..." Readers may recall that the now beleaguered IBM Corporation was one of Peter's and Waterman's model organizations.

Organizational designs are constantly changing in the first and third sector as well. The most remarkable changes in the first sector have occurred in the countries of eastern Europe and the states of the former Soviet Union. Entire new organizations and institutions are being established to replace the ones that collapsed with the demise of communism. In the third sector, where

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change and innovation have always been rapid, especially when compared to the first sector, less centralized, agile organizations move in to fill tiny niches in an complex organizational landscape. The essential point to be made is, whether organizations operate in the first, second or third sector, they exist in a sea of constant change—uncertainty—and must be designed with resilience to stay afloat.

A number of modern organizational theorists (Chandler 1962, Lawrence and Lorsch 1967, and Mintzberg 1979) suggest that organizational structure or design is determined in accordance to specific factors. Powers (1988) distilled these into (1) new environments, (2) new technical systems, and (3) new strategies. The first factor, **new environments**, refers to important emerging trends and contingencies in society, external to the organization. (In Chapter 4.0, AEA's external environment is closely examined.) Powers goes on to identify the "information age" or "postindustrial society" as the current dominant theme for organizations with regard to new environments.

Some ENGO-VOs have developed highly innovative designs that take into account the varied and changing social-political-economic environment in which they must survive. However, with the exception of a few well-endowed ENGO-VOs, most will often find themselves in the proverbial David and Goliath situation: with extremely limited resources at their disposal, they are pitted against government or large business, both of which have much deeper pockets. This demands innovative organizational designs in order to succeed.

A good case in point is the Rainforest Action Network (RAN). They often find themselves in opposition to the policies of large corporations (e.g., Burger King of American and the Marubeni Corporation of Japan) and national governments (Brazil and Malaysia). RAN is structured less like a pyramid and more like a pancake, with a small coordinating center in San Francisco with ten paid staff and a handful of volunteers that keeps 25 000 members around the world informed and involved through a network of a few, national RAN offices and hundreds of local RAGs (Rainforest Action Groups). A RAN newsletter identifies issues and suggests campaigns which members of a local RAGs may wish to get involved with. RAN's success is highly dependent on local actions organized by its lattice of RAGs (e.g., boycotting the local Burger King and pressuring them to pressure their head office not to purchase from beef suppliers in Latin American who convert rain forest into rangeland).

RAN's organizational design is what Mintzberg (1979) would call very organic and decentralized. It has proven successful in the face of dynamic and complex social, political and economic environments which include

large corporations, national governments, indigenous people in remote parts of the world, and other concerned citizens spread around the globe.[10]

For ENGO-VOs, designing the organization to take advantage of **new technical systems** has until recently been difficult because of the high cost associated with acquiring new technology. As mentioned before, ENGO-VOs have limited financial resources. Nevertheless, as certain technologies become more affordable, they can be acquired. Even the smallest of ENGO-VOs in Canada now have access to, for example, a computer. However, more sophisticated and expensive, new technologies such as video-conferencing, which is allowing some large corporations to decentralize and restructure, are currently too expensive to be acquired by ENGO-VOs.

One new, low-cost technology which ENGO-VOs can utilize is telecommunications. In reference to this emerging technological system, Frederick (1992, 15) and Rheingold (1991, 5) note:

> For the first time in history, the forces of peace and environmental preservation have acquired the communication tools and intelligence gathering technologies previously the province of the military, government and transnational corporations.

> Big government, big business, big politics already know how to use telecommunication technologies to amplify their effectiveness...citizens and grassroots groups need an equilizer... The combination of personal computers and the telephone network might prove as important to citizens in the information age as the printing press has been for several centuries.

With a computer and a telephone line, an organization can enjoy low-cost means of communicating (i.e., share ideas, experience, information, strategies, etc.), using, for example, the Internet. And as the "Information Highway" continues to grow, so should low-cost telecommunication opportunities.

An electronic community of global dimensions deeply rooted in the ideals of civil society is rapidly forming. Today, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), (the "mother of all third sector computer networks" and part of the Internet), has 15 000 subscribers in 90 countries[10] ; subscribers include such organizations as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth, and a large number of private citizens. APC is in fact a large umbrella network for smaller local, regional, national and international third sector networks such as WEB-Canada, PeaceNet, ConflictNet, ALTERNEX-Brazil, GREENNET-England, MANGO-Zimbabwe, and many others from around the world.

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[10]For a more indepth discussion of RAN see pp. 205, 206 of Korten's book Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Group Agenda.
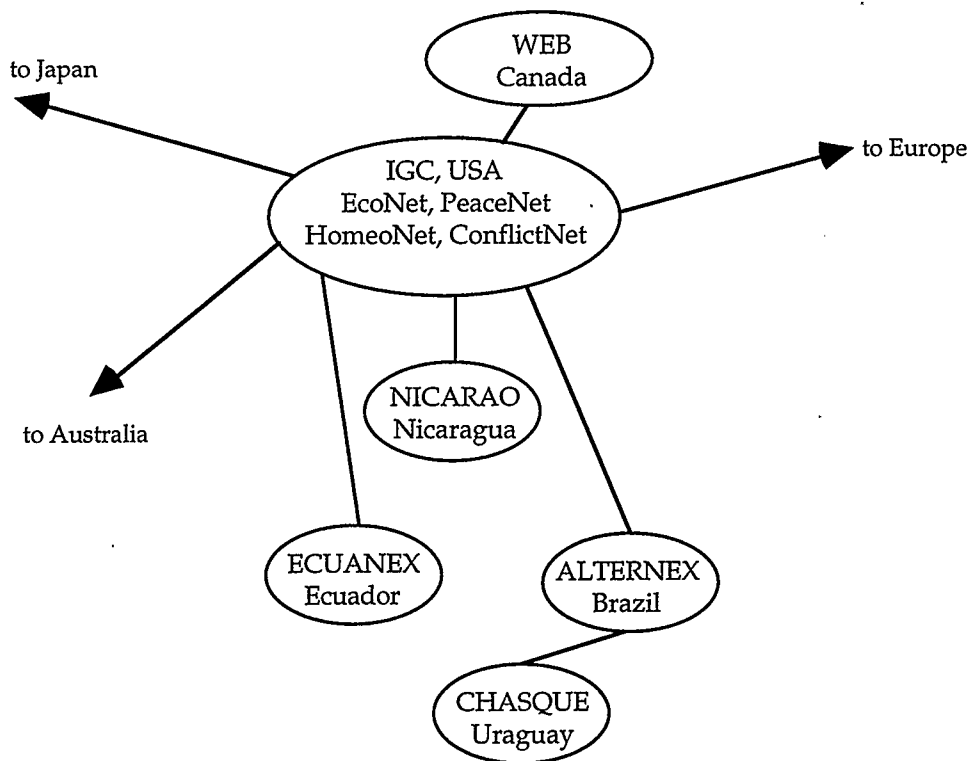
Figure 4. Association of Progressive Communications map for the Western Hemisphere. (Adapted from Frederick, 1992, 17.)

With a computer and modem one can communicate with a vast number of organizations and/or individuals on APC both economically and effectively. Further, in some situations it is now possible to access first and second sector decision-makers as well. The importance of this new technical system to ENGO-VO design and operation will likely increase. The following is an example of a third sector voluntary organization using affordable telecommunication technology to affect change.

Earthtrust is an ENGO launched, according to its director, Don White, "to deal with international wildlife protection and environmental problems that fall between the cracks of local and national environmental movements" (Rheingold 1991, 38). Earthtrust's programs are initiated and coordinated using personal computers and telephone lines. Overhead problems, the bane of many third sector organizations, were solved by "creating an electronic network of campaign workers who use electronic mail to leverage their local efforts into an international campaign" (ibid, 38). Particularly, Earthtrust has designed an organization which effectively accesses an enormous 'people resource', allowing environmentally conscious people (usually professionals), regardless of geographical location, to engage in important environmental work from their own homes. Don White further comments:

> Has Earthtrust found a panacea? As the organization's director, I'd say electronic mail comes darn close. Our organization has accomplished goals over the last two years that rival the achievements of organizations with 20 times Earthtrust's annual budget. (ibid, 38).

Earthtrust was instrumental in helping to stop illegal Korean whaling and to control deep-sea gillnetting fleets.

2.3.1 Strategy as Key

Strategy is the third factor influencing organizational design. This design factor is critical. While organizations have little control over new environments and new technical systems (since they are generated outside the organization), they do, however, have considerable control over strategy, which is generated within the organization. This puts the organization behind the steering wheel. Strategy is often developed in response to both new environments and new technical systems. For example, Earthtrust developed its innovative telecommunication strategy in response to (1) new global environmental problems which "fall between the cracks" of existing organizations (new environments) and (2) the dramatic decrease in the cost of the required technologies (new technical systems).

It is fine to recognize the importance of innovative strategy, but how is it formed? What is the process? Mintzberg (1987), Ohmae (1982) and Bandrowski (1985) argue that at its roots strategy formation is a creative process. Mintzberg (1987, 66) suggests that the image of *crafting* strategy "...better captures the process by which effective stategies come to be" and that "The planning image, long popular in the literature, distorts these processes and thereby misguides organizations that embrace it unreservedly". Ohmae (1987, 2) contends that *strategic thinking* underlies strategy formation, and notes, "Insight is the key to this process. Because it is creative, partly intuitive, and often disruptive of the status quo, the resulting plans might not even hold water from the analyst's point of view". Finally, Bandrowski (1987, 35), in reference to strategy formation, comments that it is a creative task and that the "thought mechanism used in the creative leap is the exact opposite of logical, convergent thinking". The above indicates that strategy formation at heart is a creative process, steeped in what De Bono (1973) would call "lateral thinking".

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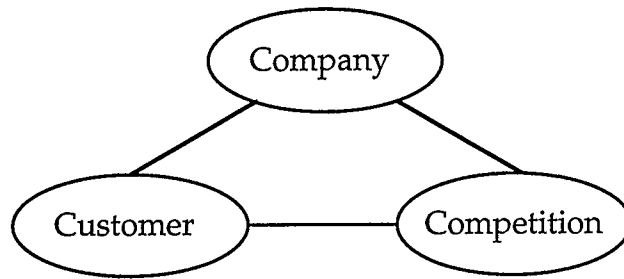
Figure 5. Ohmae's Strategic Triangle. (Adapted from Ohmae 1982, 92)

Let me now give strategy formation a human face. In reference to talented Japanese strategists such as Akio Morita, the founder of Sony, Ohmae (1982, 2) observes:

> Often—especially in Japan, where there is no business school—these outstanding strategists have had little or no formal business education, at least at the college level. They may never have read a book on strategy. But they have an intuitive grasp of basic elements of strategy. They have an idiosyncratic mode of thinking in which company, customers, an competition merge in a dynamic interaction out of which a comprehensive set of objectives and plans for action eventually crystallizes.

The said "company, customer, and competition" form Ohmae's strategic triangle (Figure 5). This triangle is a strategist's tool. It is used to help determine possible future directions for an organization by taking into account how the company, customer and competition interact. I will return to this in the next chapter.

The third sector also has talented strategists. They share similar qualities with their counterparts in the second sector. David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth and director of the Sierra Club for many years, and Randall Hayes, founder of the Rainforest Action Network, are examples. Both have, as Ohmae notes is the case with talented Japanese strategists, an intuitive grasp of the basic elements of strategy and an idiosyncratic mode of thinking. Both instinctively and intuitively know what good strategy is. Both created what Cooperrider and Pasmore (1991, 763) call *global social change organizations*, "...one of the most important social innovations of the past half-century...".

Strategists like Morita or Brower, who intuitively know what good strategy is, are few. However, an understanding of the strategic thinking process can help to further the formation of effective strategy. Ohmae sees the strategic thinking process comprised of the following steps. The first step is to determine the problem prototype (What is the problem?). This is followed by a thought process that analyzes the essence of the problem. Brainstorming sessions can aid in this second step. In the third and final step, a solution is arrived at: this is the challenging part, where aforementioned words and

phrases like "insight", "creative", "intuitive", "lateral thinking", "idiosyncratic mode of thinking" come into play. The purpose here is not to explain in detail the strategic thinking methodology—it takes Ohmae 277 pages in his book to do so—, but to recognize that strategy formation is important to the success of an organization, and that there are conceptual tools available to help organizations create effective strategy.

Once strategy has been settled upon, there exist other tools for helping organizations *program* strategy; that is, as Mintzberg (1987, 73) states "work out its implications formally." One such tool is strategic planning. In Chapter 4, a situational analysis—the conceptual and methodological core of strategic planning—is used to help program AEA's strategy. There is additional discussion about strategy and how it relates to an organization in the next two chapters. Here, it is sufficient to note that strategy is a key element of organizational design.

In sum, the simple, tripartite framework put forward by Powers helps to illuminate important dimensions of organizational design. Some ENGO-VOs have developed highly innovative designs that take into account Power's new environments, technological systems and strategies. These organizations serve as important models for other organizations. They embody and enact important elements of organizational theory. An important strength of the third sector is the free flow of ideas and information between organizations. That is to say, ideas and information are not coveted and secretive. This free flow of ideas and information combined with a limited availability of resources and a strong commitment to values results in some fascinating and innovative strategies. It would be beneficial to the ENGO community to better share these pearls.

In the 1980s, ENGO-VOs proliferated as the environmental movement gained momentum and the economy prospered. Now, with the prospect of a no-growth or little-growth economy and looming reduction in government spending in Canada, many existing ENGO-VOs, like first and second sector organizations, must redesign and reorganize to respond to the new environment. New organizations ignore these changes at their own peril.

Certainly, as Friedmann (1987) points out, many problems in society do not go away—they are just replaced by other problems. This appears to be the case with environmental problems, which still abound, but have been replaced in the public eye by pressing economic problems such as unemployment. ENGO-VOs must respond creatively to new realities in society as they at the same time attempt to create them. With this in mind, presented in the next chapter is the ENGO which I propose.

3. THE PROPOSED ORGANIZATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to introduce the proposed organization. It outlines who Alberta Environmental Alert is, what the organization would do, who it would serve and how it would operate. Also presented is AEA's strategy. It is written with two groups in mind. First, Alberta ENGOs who would potentially participate in AEA as partner organizations; second, the individuals who will help to launch the organization. Both groups would read this chapter in order to determine whether they would want to "buy in" to the AEA proposition. In this sense, it represents a prospectus.

First, several lines of thought attendant in the previous chapter should be tied in with those in this one. Strategy was recognized as a pivotal element of organizational design, particularly because it is generated within the organization. I concluded the discussion on strategy by noting that ENGOs (and organizations of the third sector in general) had developed some highly innovative strategies, and that these could be adapted by other organizations. In developing AEA, to a large extent this is what I have done: borrowed and adapted what I feel are innovative strategies employed by other third sector organizations.

The main elements of AEA's strategy—presented in greater detail on the pages which follow—can be summarized as follows.

1. Target busy Albertans who are concerned about their environment.

2. Develop a clear, easy to execute action component (e.g., letter writing).

3. Use a bulletin (print and electronic) as the primary communication vehicle.

4. Position the organization to take advantage of new, affordable developments in telecommunications, such as the Internet.

5. Invite other established ENGOs to participate.

The first and second strategic elements are adapted from 20/20 Vision, a U.S. peace and disarmament organization. This organization had crystallized my early thoughts with respect to this Project. 20/20 Vision targets busy people and advocates letter-writing as its primary action component. In the late 1980s when I first became aware of the organization, 20/20 Vision was active in the peace and disarmament arena in the U.S..

At that time I had thought an ENGO could adapt 20/20 Vision's strategy, applying it to further environmental goals. My hunch was later affirmed. By the time I began this Project, 20/20 Vision's mandate had grown to include environmental issues. I still believe that 20/20 Vision's design can work well for other social change organizations.

Let us examine 20/20 Vision more closely. A letter sent to me by Lois Barber (February 11, 1992), the founder of 20/20 Vision, explained more about the organization.

> 20/20 Vision makes our democracy work to change U.S. military and environmental policy. Our organizing model and guidebook make citizen advocacy convenient, practical, sustainable and effective.
>
> For 20 dollars a year citizens receive a monthly postcard spelling out the most important 20 minute action they can take that month to work for environmental protection and global security.
>
> Currently, in over 150 congressional districts in 33 states, local 20/20 Vision Core Groups select the monthly action for their local subscribers. Their actions are tailored for maximum impact on their particular elected officials. In districts where there is no active Core Group, the 20/20 Vision National Project offers an At-Large subscription service. Altogether there are over 10 000 20/20 Vision subscribers.

20/20 Vision's brochure explains their strategy. This is what they set out for their members:

> **Have more good intentions than free time?**
>
> <u>**What you get:**</u>
>
> - A monthly postcard containing background information, our action recommendation and the address of the person to contact
> - Our short guide on how to write an effective letter in 20 minutes
> - A brief report every six months on the results of your actions
>
> <u>**And we promise:**</u>
>
> - No meetings
> - No mountains of mail
> - We won't ask you for more money
> - We won't give your name to other organizations
> - We won't call you during supper

We now return to Ohmae's strategic triangle. In the triangle there are three main players: **corporation, customer** and **competition** (the strategic three Cs). Ohmae (1982, 92) notes, "In terms of these three key players, strategy is defined as the

way in which a corporation endeavors to differentiate itself positively from its competitors, using its relative corporate strengths to better satisfy customer needs." 20/20 Vision differentiates itself from its "competitors", using its relative strength, a well-designed networking organization with a superbly conceived program for its members, that better satisfies "customer needs", a convenient way to help affect positive social change. And 20/20 Vision has been successful. Brent Blackwelder, Vice President of Friends of the Earth, U.S., comments: "20/20 Vision is the most effective grassroots lobbying organization I have ever seen..."[1]

The third strategic element, using a bulletin as the main communication vehicle, has been successfully employed by many ENGOs, including Greenpeace, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, The Rainforest Action Network, Sierra Club chapters, and the Alberta Wilderness Association. Amnesty International also uses a bulletin to keep its members informed. The fourth strategic element, positioning the organization to ride the rising but not yet crested telecommunication wave is not new either. ENGOs such as Earthtrust, (mentioned in the previous chapter) for several years now have been innovative third sector explorers—and settlers—of cyberspace.

What other organizations do not do, however, is collaborate in producing a bulletin. This brings us to AEA's fifth strategic element: inviting other ENGOs to participate. The objective here is to form a mutual benefit association, in which all participants—generals members, the AEA organization, and other ENGOs—both contribute to and receive something from participating in the organization. There is a need for social change organizations such as ENGOs to better cross-link, network and form coalitions (Friedmann 1987).

In sum, AEA is characterized by different strategic elements. Of the five main ones, four are adapted from other third sector organizations. One is, to the best of my knowledge, new for an Alberta ENGO. Hence, AEA as conceived represents a hybrid organization characterized by various strategic elements. These elements to a large extent define who AEA is, what it would do, who it would serve and how it would operate.

What follows has had four iterations. First, before any words were put on paper—and before this was my MDP—I sought informal feedback from friends and acquaintances regarding the proposed organization. Gradually, aided by their suggestions, opinions, concerns, etc., the organization took shape in my mind. Second, while I was working on Chapter 1, I developed drafts of this chapter's Figure 6 (How the organization would work), Figure 7 (The AEA bulletin), and Figure 8 (AEA budget estimates) and other key propositions. I presented these to three individuals who had ENGO organizational experience in

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[1] This quote is from 20/20 Vision's brouchure.

Alberta and three people who did not: their comments also helped to shape the organization (See p. 84). Third, I drafted this chapter and circulated it among my MDP Supervisory Committee, and received their feedback. This also influenced this chapter. Fourth, I performed the situational analysis presented in the next chapter, methodically accessing AEA's internal and external environment, and AEA's proposed strategy. This process also yielded considerations which are now incorporated in this chapter.

Last, regarding the evolving nature of this Project, in the two years that have lapsed since I began writing, there have been radical changes in telecommunications. Just last year, when I would mention the "Internet", people would answer with blank looks, even on university campuses. Now the Internet is regularly featured in academic journals, daily newspapers and popular weekly magazines. The point being, that as time passed, the telecommunication dimension of this Project has moved from *that of merely being a sideshow to that of being a central thrust.*

It should also be noted that this chapter is not final. Called for in the Action Plan (Chapter 5) is a review and, as is likely, a reworking of the proposed organization by myself and other members of the founding committee before the organization is incorporated. Moreover, the ideas on these pages are periodically organized and reorganized in my mind; this vision-revision process, too, will continue. And when the proposed organization is finally enacted, it will no doubt continue to evolve.

What now follows is the earlier mentioned general prospectus for those who might buy into the AEA proposition.

3.2 Who is AEA? (Executive Summary)

AEA is a proposed environmental nongovernmental organization (ENGO) for Alberta. AEA stands for Alberta Environmental Alert. AEA's mission is to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment. To achieve its mission, AEA will cooperate with other Alberta ENGOs. Four to eight Alberta-based ENGOs are to be invited to join AEA as **partner organizations**. A "snapshot" of how AEA would work is presented in Figure 6.

The flagship of AEA would be a succinct, informative, four to eight page bulletin (Figure 7). This bulletin would present one-page summaries of key environmental issues, both in print and electronic form. These one-page summaries are essentially "action alerts". The environmental issues presented in the bulletin would be researched and written by AEA partner organizations. Each partner organization would be allotted one page to present one issue. AEA would edit, format, collate, and distribute the bulletin. It would be strategically distributed bimonthly (six times a year) across the Province to key media contacts, universities and colleges, coffee houses and other appropriate places. It would also be distributed to AEA's general members and local computer bulletin boards (BBSs) around the province, and through the Internet.

Benefits to partner organizations include an opportunity to inform Albertans about important environmental issues, increased profile, potential to attract new members, potential support on important issues, and a modest commitment of resources ($80 to $100 per issue).

General members are an important part of AEA. They would be private citizens who have committed themselves upon joining the organization to a minimum of six simple actions a year. They would receive the bulletin informing them about "environmental alerts" and carry out a simple but effective action (writing a letter, making a phone call, sending a fax, etc.) in regards to an issue presented by AEA partner organizations. In AEA, the action component is executed by general members while the organization facilitates the process by producing and distributing the bulletin.

The annual budget would be approximately $3600 (See Section 3.5 and Figure 8). Income would come from partner organizations and AEA general members. These two sources of income are sufficient to support the organization. AEA does not require government or corporate financial support to function. It would be a small, financially lean, grassroot organization capable of being managed and operated by a small handful of committed volunteers.

Partner organization 1 (one page issue summary)	Partner organization 2 (one page issue summary)	Partner organization 3 (one page issue summary)	Partner organization 4 (one page issue summary)

4 to 8 Alberta-based ENGOs

AEA
edits, formats, collates and
distributes bimonthy bulletin

AEA Bulletin

① Key Media Contacts
(Faxed or mailed) free

free ⟵ **DISTRIBUTION** ⟶ free **Computer Bulletin Boards ⑥**

free

free

$16/yr. membership

② Universities and Colleges

③ Coffee Houses

④ Internet

⑤ General Members

Partner organizations can participate in two different ways, as **permanent partners** or as **temporary partners**. Permanent partners would participate in every issue of the bulletin, while temporary partners would participate according to their needs, perhaps making a submission to the bulletin only once a year. At minimum, there will be three permanent partners and one temporary partner. A permanent partner pays $80 per issue to participate; a temporary partner pays $100 per issue.

3.3 The Organization in Action

The four following scenarios illustrate AEA in action. Scenarios one and two indicate what AEA would do for its partner organizations, both permanent and temporary. Scenarios three and four indicate what it would do for people who read the bulletin, both members and non-members. In all four scenarios it will be clear that AEA itself serves as a bridging organization, helping to better connect Alberta-based ENGOs with the Alberta public.

<u>Scenario One: An AEA **permanent partner** organization</u>

ENGO A is one of the largest conservation organizations in Alberta. They joined AEA for several reasons, but particularly because it involved a minimal commitment of resources for the benefits realized. Since ENGO A already prepares "action alerts" for publication in their own newsletter, the submissions for the AEA bulletin are easily done. Through AEA they can reach more people.

ENGO A has designated one person within their organization as an AEA liaison. This person is responsible for all dealings between ENGO A and AEA, including participating as a member of the AEA board, representation guaranteed to all permanent partner organizations to assure that their ideas and concerns are accounted for. Part of the liaison's job is to make sure that a one-page issue summary reaches AEA six times a year.

ENGO A is skeptical about the effectiveness of letter-writing, but agrees that it is one of many actions necessary to help achieve their goals. ENGO A likes the idea of reaching possible new members, especially at Alberta's universities and colleges. They also like how AEA has positioned itself as an "on-line" organization, responding to an increasingly important trend in society. If ENGO A's participation in AEA results in two new members joining a month, the dues of these two new members would cover the annual cost of being an AEA permanent partner—this they feel is money well spent.

Scenario Two: An AEA **temporary partner** organization

ENGO B is small, northern and rural-based. Total membership is under one hundred. A major development is being planned in a nearby ecologically sensitive area. Among other actions, ENGO B needs to raise awareness and garner wider support in order to challenge the project.

ENGO B needs to get their message out. So far, only the local press has paid any attention to the issue. A member suggested contacting a larger ENGO for support. One suggestion made by the larger ENGO was to run a one-page summary of the issue in the AEA bulletin. That way the issue would become more widely known. As a result, they could expect some direct support in the form of letters and phone calls.

ENGO B 's issue appeared in the January-February AEA bulletin. Since ENGO B had only a single issue and a limited budget, they elected to participate in only one AEA bulletin for the cost of $100 dollars. The one-page issue summary proved to be quite eye-catching and was therefore photocopied, distributed and posted by ENGO B throughout their local area.

Scenario Three: An AEA **general member**

Karen Jennings is a busy person. Her work takes her all over Calgary. One place she often relaxes during her busy day is at a Cafe X. She often thumbs through the various free publications found in the cafe to take her mind off work.

After reading the AEA bulletin a few times, Karen decided to join the organization, and now receives the bimonthly bulletin through E-mail. As a busy mother of three, she likes AEA for a number of reasons: no meetings to attend, concise issue summaries, and a simple, clear action component. When she joined the organization, she committed herself to write a minimum of six letters a year concerning issues of her choice, something that even as a working mother she can find time to do.

Although AEA has no formal meetings, Karen is able to participate in the ongoing AEA computer conferences on her home computer at her own convenience. She likes these "meetings" because she is able to network with kindred spirits around the province. At the conferences ideas are exchanged about some of the issues covered in the AEA bulletin. Also, in the **AEA Online Resource Centre** (an Internet "site" at U of C) she can access a wide variety of information including how to write effective letters, issue updates, listing of events, and so on. Best of all, by participating in the computer conferences she has now become friends with another AEA general member who lives in northern Alberta. She hopes to visit that person next summer to solidify a friendship and to learn more about forestry concerns in her friend's area.

<u>Scenario Four: An AEA non-member</u>

Mike Jones is a university ecology student. He is deeply concerned about environmental issues. Last month, while exploring the Internet, he came upon AEA's electronic bulletin.

Mike appreciated ENGO A 's balanced, well-researched and informative one-page issue summaries which appear in the bulletin, and decided that ENGO A was an organization that he would like to get involved with. Doubting the effectiveness of simply writing letters, he wanted to join an organization that engaged in other actions as well, as ENGO A does.

Mike is now an active member of ENGO A. Occasionally, when he logs on to the Internet, he still reads through the AEA electronic bulletin to keep himself up to date on important environmental issues in the province.

3.4 How would the organization do it?

As mentioned earlier, a succinct, informative bulletin would serve as the AEA flagship. Production and strategic distribution of the bulletin is how AEA aims to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment. Detailed information about the bulletin and a distribution strategy for it are presented below.

3.4.1 The Bulletin

What would this bulletin actually look like and how would it be organized? Figure 7 is provided to answer this question . Each printed copy of the bulletin would have four to eight such pages. It would be printed on 100% post consumer nongloss paper. Figure 7 shows that each page would be divided into three main sections: **information** (part A), **action** (part B) and **organization** (part C). The format of the electronic version would be basically the same, except that there would be no graphics. Still, like its paper counterpart, it would have the three mentioned sections.

Information

Part A would be researched and written by AEA partner organizations. Because of the limited amount of space on one page, this section will not be allowed to exceed a specified number of words. For the purpose of quality and continuity, an AEA editor will review all submissions. There will be simple writing guidelines such as the referencing of all statistics and statements in an effort to establish a creditable publication. AEA would format the information, using a document design template.

(Part A)

BACKGROUND
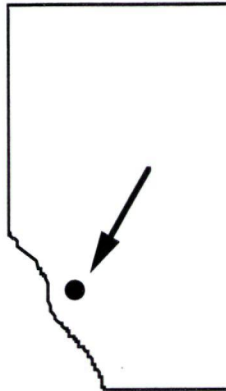
SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

KEY POINTS

(Part B)

Write/Call/Fax/Visit

Additional Information

(Part C)

ENGO A

This information is presented by ENGO A, an AEA partner organization whose mandate is to work for the establishment of greener cities in Alberta. ENGO A has over 1000 members. If you would like to join contact ...

AEA

Our mission is to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment. For more information...

Call: Fax: E-mail:

Part A would have four sub-sections. **One**, a background section, the longest section, in which most of the summary information about the issue is presented. **Two**, a small inset map locating the issue in the province. **Three**, a solution and alternatives section which indicates how the issue might be handled differently or resolved. **Four**, key points presented in point form to facilitate effective letter-writing.

Action

Part B would also be prepared by AEA partner organizations. Presented here would be addresses and phone numbers of the key decision-makers to contact regarding the issue and a short list of references for those who wanted more detailed information, presuming it exists.

Organization

Part C provides brief information about both the partner organization and AEA. This information might include mandate, number of members, cost of membership, upcoming events, contact address and phone number, etc. Part C is intended to help an interested reader learn more about the ENGO who has presented the issue, including how they can join if they wish.

3.4.2 Distribution

Distribution of the bimonthly bulletin is another important dimension of AEA. In this regard, AEA intends to reach as many readers as possible while keeping the production and distribution costs and potential waste as low as possible. AEA will accomplish this by employing several innovative strategies, all of which aim to maximize readership while minimizing the number of copies of the bulletin produced and distributed.

Below, following the description of each strategy, are "ball park" estimates of how many people might be reached using a particular distribution strategy and the approximate cost associated with the respective distribution method.

1) **Key Media** - The media has the ability to further amplify issues. Keeping the media informed on a regular basis is important, and so is presenting the issue succinctly. AEA would help organizations accomplish this. The bulletin would be mailed or faxed to at least 10 key media people in radio, television and the print media across the province.

   Number of people reached: approximately 1000 (indirectly)
   Estimated cost: $10 bimonthly (10 mailings at $1)

2) **Universities and Colleges** - University and college students represent an important group for AEA. To reach this group economically, "information

boards" will be established on campuses. Here students will be able to peruse the AEA "environmental alerts". Tear-off cards providing essential information about the respective issues will be attached below the information boards. This should help to encourage people to act.

Like Amnesty International at the University of Calgary, an Internet "site" will be established for AEA. This site will serve as an electronic version of the above mentioned information board. An AEA Internet site will also serve as the electronic meeting place for AEA, where members can interact with each other.

Estimate of number of people reached: 1200
Approximate cost: $15 bimonthly (15 mailings @ $1)

3) **Coffee Houses** - In the last decade there has been a dramatic rise in the number of coffee houses in Alberta, especially in cities. Many coffee houses attract an important target group for AEA: people potentially interested and concerned about environmental issues. At these strategic places, similar to magazines in libraries, smartly bound copies of the bulletin will be made available for people to read on site. Envisioned here is an attractive, hard-cover binder containing the bulletin. A bound copy allows the bulletin to be read many times; this helps to keep production runs (and costs) low and helps to minimize waste. It would also serve to set the AEA bulletin apart from the many other leaflets and flyers that are distributed by other groups at coffee houses.

A coffee house is one type of "social network place". Others include gyms, community centers and churches. If coffee houses prove successful, these will also be considered as places to make the AEA bulletin available.

Estimated number of people reached: 3600 (This assumes that the AEA bulletin is made available at 30 coffee shops in the province and that an average of two people a day will read the bulletin at each coffee shop each day for a period of two months)
Cost: $30 bimonthly (30 mailings @ $1/each)

4) **AEA's General Members** - As mentioned earlier, AEA would also have its own general members. The AEA bulletin would be distributed to each member, and each member would be encouraged to choose one issue from the bulletin and execute a small but important action (e.g., write a letter, make a phone call, send a fax, or pay a visit) regarding it.

Estimated number of people reached: 100
Cost: $100 bimonthly (100 mailings @$1/each)

5) **Computer Bulletin Boards (BBSs)** - The AEA bulletin would also be posted on appropriate BBSs in the province. Anyone with a computer, a modem and standard telephone lines can call up at no charge a local computer bulletin board, usually maintained by a group of volunteers, to access information. They then could read or copy the AEA bulletin. There are at least two BBSs which serve Alberta-based environmental organizations and their members.

AEA would closely track telecommunications developments and opportunities, for it is becoming increasingly apparent that this means of communication is becoming as important to ENGOs as it is to government and business. Eventually, far more copies of the AEA bulletin may reach people in electronic form than in print form.

Estimated number of people reached: 200 (This number has strong growth potential)
Cost: Free

Using the above distribution strategies, a conservative estimate is that 4900 Alberta citizens would be reached, incurring a distribution cost $155.00. (The capital and operating costs of the organization are discussed in Section 3.5.)

3.4.3 Benefits and measures of success

AEA would be a mutual benefit association. This means that participants— partner organizations, AEA general members and the AEA organization itself— would all benefit, each contributing and each in turn receiving something.

Benefits to partner organizations - Partner organizations can not be expected to participate in AEA unless benefits are realized. What would these benefits be?

1) **Inform People** - The AEA bulletin would help to keep Albertans informed about important issues. While individual organizations do make their publications available, most of these are not widely circulated, and a bulletin which presents a compilation of "action alerts" from a number of ENGOs does not exist.

2) **Increased Profile** - Participation in AEA would increase the visibility of partner organizations. Six times a year readers of the AEA bulletin would learn what the various organizations are doing. In addition, key media people would regularly learn about partner organizations and their activities.

3) **New Members** - Included at the bottom of every page in the bulletin would be an invitation to join an AEA partner organization. While it would be unrealistic to expect a stampede of new members, it is likely that a small number of people would join a partner organization as a result of reading the bulletin.

4) **Increased Support** - AEA partner organizations can expect increased support on important issues. The support would be both tangible and intangible. Tangible support generated by the bulletin would take the form of specific actions (letters, phone calls, faxes, etc. to key decision-makers); intangible support would be in the form of increased awareness about an issue.

5) **Minimal Commitment of Resources** - Participation in AEA requires a minimal commitment of resources. $80 to $100 an issue is the cost to the partner organizations; preparation of an issue summary is the other commitment. This would likely not over-strain an organization. (Many organizations already prepare such information summaries for their own action alerts.)

There are two primary measures of success for AEA partner organizations. The first is the number of new members which join partner organizations as a result of participating in AEA. The second is support on important issues.

Benefits to general members - General members would benefit from AEA in several ways. First, they would receive an informative bimonthly bulletin. Second, by reading the issue summaries they would be kept informed about important issues. Third, participation in AEA would allow general members to be active members of an organization with a minimal commitment of time and resources.

Because a range of actions (letter-writing, negotiation, consultation, legal action, protests, boycotts, etc.) on different political fronts are necessary to affect change with regards to any one environmental issue, and because AEA would be just one of several actors, it is difficult to directly measure the success of participation by general members in AEA. Much of the success for general members will not be measured by dramatic environmental victories; instead, it will be measured by what the general member gains at a personal level from being a better informed and more active member of society in relation to issues they care about.

Benefits to AEA - As stated in Section 3.2, AEA's mission is to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment. Having both partner organizations and general members participating in the coalition is a great benefit to AEA. Without both groups it would be impossible for AEA to achieve its mission. Partner organizations help provide both credibility and financial stability for AEA, two factors which can be the nemeses of young ENGOs. General members are equally important, functioning as the life blood of the organization by carrying out the actions which sustain it. While AEA's measures of success tie in closely with those of its partner organizations and general members, it does have tangible ways to

measure success: first, by the number of partner organizations who participate, and second, by the number of general members it can attract.

3.5 Who pays and how much?

Figure 8 indicates who pays and approximately how much, and how expeditures are made. Regarding revenues, there would be two distinct sources: partner organizations and AEA general members. Because the organization is volunteer supported, and low-cost strategies are employed, the organization is financially lean. This is reflected in the expenditures detailed in Figure 8.

Permanent partner organizations would pay $480 per annum ($80 per issue). This would entitle them to appear in six issues, each reaching approximately five thousand people bimonthly. Other environmental organizations could participate on a "drop-in" basis for $100 per issue. (If feasible, subsidies will be made available for particularly impoverished organizations.) Based on a minimum of four organizations participating per issue (three permanent partners and one temporary), partner organization dues would generate $2040 per year.

Direct members would pay $16 per year for membership. The bulletin would be mailed to their home six times a year. The dues of one hundred members, a realistic goal, would generate $1600 per year.

Further details of the AEA budget are presented in Figure 8.

3.6 Organizational structure

The AEA Core Group, consisting of approximately ten volunteers, would be responsible for carrying out all business of the organization. The Core Group would comprise (1) a small, elected executive of four people and (2) four subcommittees of two to three persons each. The four subcommittees are: (1) the **membership and volunteer committee**, (2) the **finance and funding committee**, (3) **the bulletin committee**, and (4) the **special projects committee**. To ensure good coordination between the executive and the subcommittees, four members of the executive would each chair one of the four subcommittees. As stated earlier, permanent partner organizations would be granted representation within AEA to ensure that their concerns and interests can be voiced. This representation would be in the form of a body called the Council of AEA partner organizations. One position within the AEA executive would be reserved for a representative from the council; this person would have voting privileges within the executive.

AEA BUDGET ESTIMATES (Figure 8)
YEAR 1

Partner Organization 1 Permanent basis $480/year ($80/issue)	Partner Organization 2 Permanent basis $480/year ($80/issue)

Partner Organization Contribution ➤

Partner Organization 3 Permanent basis $480/year ($80/issue)	Partner Organization 4 Temporary basis $600/year ($100/issue)

AEA REVENUES

$ 3640/year
($ 607/bimonthly)

◄ General Member Contribution

$1600
(100 members
@ $16/year)

AEA EXPENDITURES

Bimonthly Expenditures

Printing (145 copies @ 50¢/copy)	72.50
Mailings (stamps, envelopes;145 @ 50¢/unit)	72.50
Telephone charges (calling card)	100.00
Voice mailbox fees	33.00
Mailbox fees	20.00
Internet fees	60.00
Sustainability Fund contribution	60.00
Miscellaneous	60.00
Total	**478.00**

Fixed Expenditures

Binders (30 @ $10/each)	300.00
Materials for constructing information boards	150.00
Incorporation fees	150.00
Total	**600.00**
Averaged over one year (6 payments)	100.00

TOTAL BIMONTHLY EXPENDITURE	**578.00**
TOTAL BIMONTHLY REVENUE	**607.00**
Bimonthly surplus	**29.00**

(Assumptions: no fixed office and computer hardware and software is borrowed)
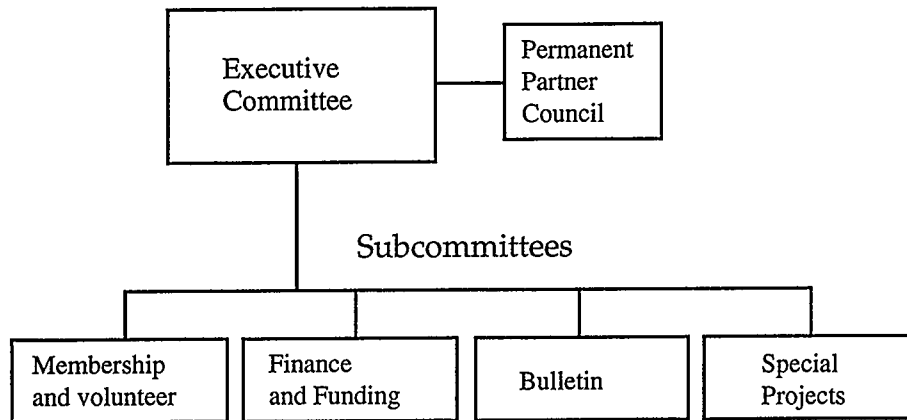
Figure 9. AEA's proposed organizational structure

On the surface, AEA would look like many other not-for-profit organizations with an executive and a variety of subcommittees. It would be different, however, in that most of the activities would be conducted and coordinated on-line. The on-line format offers several key advantages: (1) meeting times are flexible, (2) thorough records are maintain easily and can be reviewed at anytime, and, (3) board and all other committees can participate regardless of geographic location. It also allows key people within the organization exposure to an important strategic dimension of the organization: telecommunications.

3.7 Additional Information

3.7.1 Questions Answered

What problem is this a solution to?

Why have an AEA organization? Does Alberta need another environmental organization?

Diversity has been one key factor in the success of the environmental movement. Many organizations have demonstrated a high degree of inventiveness and innovation. Problems of the environment are multifaceted and the response to these problems also needs to be multifaceted—a variety of actions and approaches are required.

AEA introduces a new organizational design model that attempts to address key challenges facing many environmental organizations today: how to do more with less; how can work-loads be better distributed among membership; how can organizations better cooperate; what new social and technological innovations can be utilized?

AEA alone is not going to solve all environmental problems. It can, however, fill a small niche that is currently vacant and be a part of a vast network of citizens and organizations that make up one of the most dynamic and timely societal change movements in human history, the environmental movement.

Is one page enough?

One page is enough to summarize an issue's key points. While the length does not allow for in-depth coverage, it is sufficient to introduce an issue and to highlight key points. Readers who felt they needed more information would be encouraged to consult the references listed in the action section of the bulletin. The objective is to present concise, readable summaries of the issues, not complete and total coverage.

Why does AEA emphasize letter-writing?

Writing letters is arguably the single most effective action which can be initiated by an individual regarding an issue. Letters alone will not change policy but they can help. In support of letter-writing the following are offered.

- "I was always (while in office) informed of individual letters that were particularly telling. I often quoted letters in my speeches. If I didn't, I was nevertheless influenced by them. The aggregate is important. For example, I kept a running tally on such issues as South Moresby." [2] – Tom McMillan, former Canadian Environment Minister.

- Many environmental organizations including Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and Nature Canada encourage their members to write letters.

- Letter-writing is the primary action vehicle for Amnesty International, who has one million members worldwide.

- Most all citizen environmental handbooks and guides recommend letter-writing as a means of influencing decision-making.

Can AEA realistically operate entirely as a volunteer supported organization?

AEA would have a core group of approximately ten people. Because the overall work load would be distributed quite evenly among the partner organizations (who would research and write the issue summaries), the general members (who would carry out the action component by writing letters, etc.) and the core group (who would format, collate and distribute the bulletin), the core group would not

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[2] "Personal Action Guide." *Borealis* Summer 1991 p. 47

be over burdened. The core group would be structured so volunteers work no more than four to eight hours a month, depending on specific responsibilities.

What if our organization does not agree with what another organization has written about an issue?

Authorship would be very clear. Each page of the bulletin would represent a particular organization's interpretation of an particular issue. This would be stated clearly at the bottom of each page.

Of the partner organizations, who gets first choice of issues?

The three permanent partner organizations would have first choice. The organizations who participate on a "drop in" basis would have second choice. Among the three permanent partner organizations, first choice would rotate.

3.7.2 Amnesty International and 20/20 Vision

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is the most successful and influential human rights organization in the world. It is active in many countries and has over one million members. In 1977, Amnesty International won the Nobel Prize for Peace.

How does Amnesty International help to expedite the release of prisoners of conscience worldwide? By encouraging members to write letters. Pick up any issue of the Amnesty International bulletin and one will find several pages dedicated to describing the plight of several prisoners of conscience. The prisoner's name, picture, important background information, and most importantly, what addresses to write to make a difference, is all presented on one page. An Amnesty International member reads the summaries and chooses the one or ones she or he feels most strongly about.

It is hard to believe that a letter addressed to a government representative in a repressive country on the other side of the world can make a difference. But these letters do seem to make a difference. Letter-writing combined with other action has helped to free hundreds whose crime has been their thoughts. Amnesty International is an excellent example of international, grassroots citizen advocacy.

While operating in a different arena, AEA incorporates two key ideas from Amnesty International. First, is the idea of presenting several "issues" which a reader can review and choose from. This is important because not all individuals will agree with all the issues. One should not feel pressured to act on something they may not agree with. Second, is the focus on letter-writing, a simple, peaceful action that even the busiest person can make time for.

20/20 Vision

> "20/20 Vision is the most effective grassroots lobbying organization I have ever seen. And I have seen a lot" – Brent Blackwelder, Vice President, Friends of the Earth, U.S.

> "Like a wake-up call to slumbering citizens who yearn to take a stand for peace and the environment but never have enough time or energy, 20/20 Vision sends its subscribers a bright colored postcard once a month detailing the most effective 20-minute action they can take in the public interest" – The Washington Post, January 11, 1990

20/20 Vision, an American grassroots advocacy group, has in many ways inspired AEA. Originally, 20/20 Vision was established to assist U.S. citizens in influencing their government's military policy. Now the group also works to influence environmental policy in the U.S.. 20/20 Vision core groups are active in over 150 congressional districts in 33 states. Total membership is 10 000. A Canadian chapter with several hundred members operates in the Vancouver, B.C..

20/20 Vision's name explains their approach. Members commit $20 dollars of their money a year and 20 minutes of their time a month to the organization, and in exchange the organization advises the members what 20-minute action is the most effective to influence an issue. The issues are selected by local core groups, who prepare an information postcard, usually in consultation with other organizations, and mail it out to their members. This allows for focus on local issues. Members are expected to write in response to the issue which is presented.

Although AEA shares common elements with 20/20 Vision (e.g., letter-writing as the primary action vehicle, targets busy and concern individuals, seeks action commitment from members and its environmental focus) it differs in several key ways. First, people are presented with four to eight issues rather than just one. This gives people a choice. Second, one page allows for more detailed issue coverage than 20/20 Vision' s small postcard does. Third, while 20/20 Vision relies on the work of other organizations for the information they present, direct recognition is not given; AEA gives clear recognition to those organizations who research and present an issue. And last, AEA would potentially reach about 5 000 people shortly after start up; new 20/20 Vision chapters start at zero. In summary, while the two organizations differ in approach, some the strengths of 20/20 Vision are embodied in the design of AEA.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

> So-called strategic planning must be recognized for what it is: a means, not to create strategy, but to program strategy already created—to work out its implications formally.

> Smart strategists appreciate that they cannot always be smart enough to think through everything in advance.
>
> Henry Mintzberg

Situational analysis "embodies the conceptual and methodological core of strategic planning by focusing attention on environmental trends that may affect the mission and strategy of the agency" (Kearns 1992, 4). As Mintzberg (1987, 73) states, strategic planning is used to "program strategy already created". I used situational analysis to assess and program strategies which I had initially thought out for AEA. In this chapter, the reader will see the wellspring of certain strategic elements and refinements presented in Chapter 3. Hence, the reader glimpses how certain designs presented in the previous chapter were developed.

I first identified **key external forces** relevant to the proposed organization. For AEA, thirty were initially identified. By grouping similar and like forces together, these were then reduced to six.

1. Environmental movement
2. Information and media
3. Alberta's ENGO community
4. Alberta's economic situtation
5. Telecommunication technologies
6. The state of volunteerism

In a second step, I selected possible **conditions** related to the key external forces. These conditions were essentially "what if" scenarios. For example, related to the first key external force identified, what if the environmental movement weakens? How will this effect AEA? The objective here was not to present as many conditions as possible, but to select a few which most likely and plausibly constitute trends and forces of importance to the organization.

AEA's strategic position was then analyzed vis-a-vis the six, selected conditions, using the situational or **SWOT** framework. Four lists are developed: strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and opportunities and threats operating in the environment external to the organization. Kearns (ibid, 4) notes that these lists need to be systematically related to each other in order to avoid "a list-generating exercise" that will be of little value to the organization. I present each of the six SWOT analyses as single figures. This better allows external

opportunities and threats to be directly linked to AEA's internal strengths and weaknesses. I then present a brief written **discussion** of the SWOT analysis. Last, **possible strategic responses** or options in light of the situational analysis are presented. A number of these were adopted—hence reshaping the AEA model I had initially conceived.

4.2 Key Driving Force One: Environmental Movement

AEA is clearly part of the environmental movement. If the current, depressed economic conditions persist in Alberta and elsewhere, it is possible that the environmental movement will significantly weaken. Such would present serious challenges for existing ENGOs and perhaps present near insurmountable obstacles for new ones. In the future, environmental problems are not likely to go away. But in the scenario of a depressed economy, much of the public will likely be more preoccupied with more immediate financial concerns than seemingly distal environmental concerns (Paehlke, pers. comm. 1993).

4.2.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: Weakening of the environmental movement

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ★ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ need for ENGO cooperation★ ↑ need for organizational innovation → number of environmental issues	↓ government and private funding ↓ availability of volunteers★ ↓ENGO member-ship levels★	•partnership-orientation; mutually beneficial for participating parties •lean organizational design (low overhead, partnership-orientation, realistic funding sources, general members rather than the organization carry out the action component) •financially self-supporting; that is, does not rely on either government or private funding	•heavily volunteer dependent for critical operational inputs •dependent on general members for a substantial portion of funding. •new organization; ∴more difficult to establish in a depressed provincial economy •many potential AEA partner organizations are vulnerable to hard economic times

4.2.2 Discussion

Overall, a weakening of the environmental movement would present serious challenges for AEA. This possible condition exposes some critical weaknesses of

the proposed organization, namely its heavy reliance on (1) volunteers for key operational inputs and (2) membership contributions as an important funding source. On the other hand, the partnership-orientation of AEA would contribute to its viability in this scenario since ENGOs would likely form alliances, cooperate and partner more fully in order to survive. A strength of AEA, as conceived, is that it seeks to form partnerships with other ENGOs.

4.2.3 Possible Strategic Responses

1. Lessen the dependency on volunteers by strengthening the telecommunications (computer bulletin boards, E-mail, electronic conferencing systems, computer mailing lists) dimension of AEA. This would allow the mission to be achieved without relying so heavily on volunteer inputs.

2. If the environmental movement continues to weaken, particularly if government and private funding continue to decrease, some potential partner organizations may experience severe financial difficulties or disappear all together. Establish partnerships with stable, viable ENGOs.

3. From the outset, as a contingency against this condition, designate a portion of revenues (~10%) for a special sustainability fund for the organization.

4.3 Key Driving Force Two: Information and Media

AEA would effectively be in the information and media business. AEA's primary vehicle for "getting the message out" would be through a succinct bulletin. The bulletin would be mailed out to its membership and distributed free in strategic locations. If the number of competing mailouts and flyers stays stable, or if they continue to increase, it can be argued that the overall effectiveness of this type of media strategy will decrease.

4.3.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: Decreased effectiveness of mailouts and flyers ·

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ✭ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ opportunities for alternative media✭ ↑ opportunities for product differentiation	↑ volume of mailouts and flyers✭ ↓ effectiveness of mailouts and flyers ↑ backlash against mailouts and flyers✭ ↑ competition for reader's attention-response `	•members subscribe because they want to receive the AEA bulletin •the bulletin would be succinct and have simple but unique graphic appeal •information in the bulletin could also be distributed and presented electronically	•a bulletin distributed free to the general public competes directly with similar such material distributed by other businesses and organizations •low organizational budget permits only simple bulletin designs (i.e., without pictures, color, etc.)

4.3.2 Discussion

A possible decrease in the response-effectiveness of mailouts and flyers poses an important question: Is this an effective way for AEA to get the message out? Provided that people choose to subscribe to the bulletin or voluntarily pick it up—say, at the Mountain Equipment Coop—then this indeed may be an effective way to get the message out. What the above analysis points to is the need for AEA to carefully consider how the bulletin is distributed. (Alternative means are presented in Section 4.3.3)

One opportunity is for alternative media. In this regard, affordable telecommunication technologies such as personal computers linked to the emerging "Information Highway" offer promise. Telecommunications is flushed out in Section 4.2.3 as a means of reducing reliance on volunteers, who would be needed to perform important but menial tasks: fold paper, address and seal envelopes, apply stamps, and so on.

Last, a major threat to AEA would be a serious fallout-backlash against junk-mail (i.e., commercial mailouts and flyers). Albertans seem to have reached a saturation point for unsolicited mail. If AEA's bulletin is perceived to be of this genre, it could have serious implications.

4.3.3 Possible Strategic Responses

1. Encourage people to receive their bulletin via E-mail or fax, perhaps by offering discounted membership prices and additional benefits for those who elect to do so. Promote this as the most "eco-friendly" way to communicate.

2. Carefully monitor the response-effectiveness of the AEA bulletins that are stacked in stores and restaurants for free pick up. The following alternatives warrant consideration.

    i) In coffee houses and similar establishments, rather than distributing a large number of bulletins for people to read and take away with them, provide only a few which are smartly bound, attractive to the eye and available to read on the premises only.

    ii) In places such as Mountain Equipment Coop establish a dedicated, eye-catching AEA bulletin board that can be casually consulted by browsing clients. To encourage people, a "tear-off" component attached below the board listing essential information (addresses, key points, etc.) would work well. This can alleviate the need to distribute a large number of the bulletins, thus reducing costs. It also helps to establish a unique AEA identity.

3. Periodically monitor people's reaction to the bulletin. AEA could accomplish this by contacting members by phone once a year or more frequently and asking them if they are satisfied with the bulletin and the organization as a whole.

4.4 Key Driving Force Three: Alberta's ENGO Community

AEA is to be a member of Alberta's ENGO community. The <u>Alberta Environmental Directory</u> (1992) lists over 200 environmental organizations active in Alberta. To a significant degree, many of these ENGOs vie for the attention of a limited subset of the Province's population: those people who in some capacity have an interest or concern regarding environmental issues.

Such people are often confronted with a dilemma: which organization to support—the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Alberta Wilderness Association, Sierra Club's Alberta chapter, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, or Greenpeace, to name but a few. Further, these organizations often compete for the same first and second sector funding.

In light of this, what are AEA's strengths and weaknesses?

4.4.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: Increasing competition among ENGOs in Alberta for subscription, resources and contributing memberships

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ✷ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ niche opportunities (What sort of environmental organizations are currently absent in Alberta? Which services are not offered?)✷ ↑ opportunity to involve Albertans who presently are not involved with ENGO activities (i.e., new "markets") ↑ opportunity to form alliances with other ENGOs	↑ competition among ENGOs in Alberta for resources, particularly first and second sector funding✷ ↑ competition among ENGOs in Alberta for memberships✷ ↑ difficulties in forming new ENGOs because they lack credibility and compete directly with already established ENGOs	•AEA fills a niche by promising a new service, both to other ENGOs and to the Alberta public •targets Albertans who are not presently members of ENGOs. (Specifically targets busy, concerned individuals who are looking for a well thought out program which is not too time demanding). •willing to form alliances with other established Alberta ENGOs	•new organization; lacks a track record •unknown by funding sources •some organizational strategies largely unproven in Alberta (e.g. collaborative bulletin; action component carried out by membership; "on-line" telecommunications)✷

4.4.2 Discussion

The condition of increased competition among ENGOs in Alberta for subscription, resources and contributing memberships presents challenges for AEA. First, a new organization without an established name or track record, is quite obviously at a disadvantage when vying for the attention of prospective membership and funders. Working to AEA's benefit, however, is that it plans to partner with already-established ENGOs who do have a track record.

AEA's success will hinge largely on its ability to attract people currently uninvolved with ENGO activities. 20/20 Vision, the U.S. organization which AEA is in part modeled upon, well achieved this by pitching specifically to busy, concerned individuals. Much of 20/20 Vision's success is the result of its unique programming. AEA would also deliver innovative and attractive programming.

Does AEA fill a niche? Very likely. Currently, an organization such as AEA does not exist in Alberta. AEA would stand apart from other ENGOs in several important ways: it would strive to offer an action component for its members which is both convenient and effective; it would incorporate effective telecommunications technology; and, it would involve already-established ENGOs.

4.4.3 Possible Strategic Responses

Certain already created strategies could be strengthened. For example, the strategies of (1) targeting busy, concerned people for membership and (2) partnering with established ENGOs who are both credible and operationally-sound could be more fully developed. Also, in this analysis, the importance of providing excellent programming is further heightened. People must know exactly what is being offered, what to expect in the nature and character of communications, what they can expect of the organization, and what the organization expects of them.

4.5 Key Driving Force Four: Alberta's Economic Situtation

It is difficult to predict future economic conditions. Many factors influence the state of Alberta's economy. However, by assuming a worse case scenario for economic conditions in Alberta, both major and minor flaws in organizational design can be highlighted. For this reason, I have chosen a pessimistic but certainly plausible condition: depressed economic conditions (as compared to those of the 1980s) over the coming decade.

The above said, it is important to note that AEA is financially lean. Its viability is not predicated on a provincial economy characterized by high growth. It would be small, with a sharply-focused mission. A handful of volunteers would manage the organization. There would be no paid staff, and overhead would be negligible. Most of the costs involved would be for the production and distribution of the bulletin, and general membership and partner organization dues would cover this.

4.5.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: Depressed economic climate in Alberta over the next decade

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ✸ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ opportunities for organizations who can deliver services and products more efficiently and effectively✸ ↑ENGO cooperation	↑ competition among existing ENGOs and other third sector organizations in Alberta for resources, particularly first and second sector funding✸ ↑ competition for the public's attention (social and economic problems would likely dominate the media) ↑ number of ENGO failures	•AEA will deliver services to its partner organizations and members at the lowest feasible cost •a founding premise of AEA is the need for more inter-ENGO cooperation •AEA is not directly dependent upon government or private funding (though this may not be true for AEA's partner organizations)	•new organization lacking a track record •membership dependent; that is, without a healthy membership base the organization would be unable to achieve its mission •overall success directly tied to the assumption that environmental issues will continue to receive media and public attention✸

4.5.2 Discussion

In the condition of a depressed economic climate in Alberta, two weaknesses of AEA are that it would be a new organization without an established track record; and it would be dependent on members for both funding and mission success. However, counterbalancing these weaknesses is an important strength: AEA proposes to team up with already-established ENGOs, hence achieving from the outset a degree of credibility and financial stability for the organization.

If several of the strategic responses outlined earlier here are adopted, namely alternative distribution methods for the bulletin and on-line computer-assisted communications, I believe AEA could operate and even potentially flourish in depression economic conditions. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the organization's financial requirements are minimal, and two, it would provide a service presently unavailable in the Province. To a substantial degree, the organization has been conceived and designed with the current recession and a the weakening of the environmental movement in mind. I feel this approach is necessary given present economic, political and social conditions in the Province.

4.5.3 Possible Strategic Responses

1. Design a financially lean organization. Seriously consider doing without an office in order to keep overhead low.

2. Design the organization so that it can carry out its mission without government or private funding. Build the organization based on the simple premise that those who are served are those who should pay. This means general membership and partner organization dues would support AEA.

3. Cooperate and share resources with other organizations fully. AEA partner organizations may be willing to make available such office equipment as photocopiers, computers, faxes, etc. In return, AEA could discount their annual dues accordingly.

4.6 Key Driving Force Five: Telecommunications Technologies

In Chapter 2, it was established that technological systems are an important factor in organizational design. New telecommunication technologies are allowing organizations to operate in innovative ways.

Telecommunication technology represents a tool. In itself, it does not constitute the organization. "On-line" organizations do what other, similar organizations do—fight for environmental policy changes, provide religious guidance, pursue profits—but they do it in a different way: members of the organization meet, discuss topics, exchange ideas, and participate in activities on-line from locations that are often widely scattered. These locations are connected at comparatively low cost, using telephone lines, modems and computers.

4.6.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: Steady rise in the use of telecommunications in Alberta.

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ★ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ opportunity to provide services to people in widely scattered geographic locations economically ↑ opportunity to by-pass conventional information distribution channels (e.g., Canada Post) ↑ opportunity for new organizational design★	• comparatively new technology which many people are unfamiliar with • limits the type of participants (techno-literates vs. techno-illiterates)★ • comparatively high initial cost for individuals to purchase the necessary equipment	•AEA incorporates telecommunications in its organizational design •AEA gives its members the choice between conventional mail and electronic mail •AEA's mission can be achieved through the use of low-cost telecommunications technologies (getting important information to members so they can act)	• AEA lacks funds for large capital expenditures on telecommunications technologies (modems, computers, software, etc.). • providing two distinct services (conventional mail and electronic mail) is logistically more difficult than providing just one

4.6.2 Discussion

Telecommunications presents a potentially powerful lever for ENGOs. There are several interesting opportunities associated with this condition. Four are listed in the SWOT analysis. Two of these are particularly relevant to AEA. First, the opportunity to provide services to people spread out over large areas economically; and, second, the opportunity for new organizational designs, such as structuring the organization so that much of the business of the organization takes place on-line.

A steady rise of the use of telecommunications in Alberta also presents threats. All the threats listed in the foregoing analysis point to the emergence of two classes of citizenry: the techno-elites (computer literates) and the techno-peasants (computer illiterates). In order to accommodate both groups, AEA would provide its members with the option of participating electronically or non-electronically: this is a key strength of AEA. For example, a member would have the choice of receiving the bulletin via conventional mail or via electronic mail or fax.

4.6.3 Possible Strategic Responses

Here are some possible strategic responses for AEA regarding telecommunications.

1. Join the WEB, Canada's third sector telecommunications network. Once a member-organization (annual cost of $340), it would be possible to establish an on-line "meeting place" or conference sites where the bulletin could be displayed, ideas exchanged, sample letters posted, updates provided and detailed background information made available for those who desired it. Further, AEA members would then have access to many other on-line resources.

   The advantage of organizing it through WEB is that AEA would then not have to acquire costly computer hardware and software itself; instead, it would all be done on WEB's mainframe. The disadvantage, however, is cost. Each member of AEA would be required to pay $25/year plus $13.70 an hour for on-line fees. For a member to download the latest version of the bulletin would be less than fifty cents; however, to have a meaningful on-line discussion could be quite costly.

2. Establish a public access AEA BBS (electronic bulletin board service) in Alberta. Required is a personal computer, the appropriate software, a modem, a dedicated telephone line and a SYSOPS, a systems operator who periodically ensures that all is well. While virtually cost free to operate, an initial expenditure of $1500 dollars to purchase hardware and software is

necessary. Once the BBS is established, members would then pay standard AGT telephone rates for access to the BBS and could engage in most of the activities listed in the previous paragraph, with the exception of real-time interactive conferencing and communications with other organizations and individuals.

3. Use existing third sector BBSs. Several of these operate in Alberta. The clear advantage of using existing BBSs is that AEA would not have to acquire expensive computer hardware and software. The disadvantage is that public BBSs are often poorly managed.

4. Open an Internet account for AEA at the cost of $20/month. Once opened, it then becomes possible to communicate with others (e.g., members) who also have Internet access. Through the Internet it would be possible (and economical) to do several things. First, an E-mail mailing list for the bulletin could be established. This would allow the bulletin to be distributed to members in a timely fashion at no cost. Second, a site on the Internet for electronic conferences could be established. Here, members could exchange ideas, receive updates, coordinate activities, stay in touch with the AEA executive, etc. Third, it should be possible to establish an AEA on-line resource centre. This electronic resource centre could offer information on citizen advocacy, government legislation, effective letter-writing, events, and so on.

4.7 Key Driving Force Six: State of Volunteerism

AEA is to be a volunteer-supported organization with no paid staff. There would be two groups of volunteers: (1) general members who would carry out six simple actions a year, and (2) members of the AEA Core Group who would help to run and manage the organization. Hence, volunteerism is a key driving force. A moderately pessimistic condition is conjectured.

4.7.1 SWOT Analysis

CONDITION: a decline in volunteerism in Alberta

↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing, → steady, ✭ particularly relevant to AEA

AEA's **External** Environment		AEA's **Internal** Environment	
Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	Weaknesses
↑ opportunities to attract professionals (who more and more work on a contractual basis with periods of quiescence between contracts)✭ ↑ opportunities for well-designed programs for volunteers ↑ opportunities for volunteer activities which can be conveniently incorporated into one's daily life	↑ competition among third sector organizations for volunteers✭ ↓ availibility of volunteers✭ • people less willing to commit large amounts of time to an organization✭	• clearly laid out volunteer program-ming • low time demands for general mem-bers; moderate time demands for admin-istrative core • programming assumes that most people are busy with little time to give	• new, unknown organization, and therefore difficult to attract volunteers • volunteer work usually provides a forum for like-minded individuals to meet, talk, and generally socialize. AEA is weak in this respect since members function independently of each other.

4.7.2 Discussion

AEA is well-positioned to capitalize on two of the opportunities. AEA would endeavor to deliver (1) a well-designed program that can be (2) easily incorporated into one's everyday life.

If volunteerism weakens, a possible threat is competition among third sector organizations for a reduced number volunteers. This further heightens the need

to design a program attractive to volunteers. The last threat listed (people less willing to commit large amounts of time) is inherently recognized in AEA's approach of promoting simple yet effective action that does not require large amounts of time to execute, for example, writing a letter.

AEA's strengths of low time-demand on volunteers coupled with clear programming, and employment of telecommunications technologies would help the organization to weather a general decline in volunteerism in Alberta. The second of the two weaknesses (little social interaction) may in fact be a strength for AEA, for people who want "social" activities could participate in those of the partner organizations.

4.7.3 Possible Strategic Responses

1. Include space in the AEA bulletin for partner organizations to announce their activities (talks, gatherings, clean-ups, etc.) that readers are expected to be interested in.

2. Develop a marketing message (such as 20./20 Vision's) so that people know exactly what is they are volunteering for as general members. For example, the **6:30 program**—minimum of **6** simple actions a year at **30** minutes per actions.

4.8 Summary

AEA's strategic position was assessed in relation to six distinctive conditions. Four conditions were quite dire: (1) a weakening environmental movement, (2) increasing competition among ENGOs, (3) a depressed economy, and (4) a decline in volunteerism. These conditions represent rather stormy seas. With changes, it appears that AEA can say afloat in these stormy seas.

The SWOT analyses produced a number of possible strategic responses. I chose several of the most promising ones, making these an integral part of the proposed organization (Chapter 3).

1. In response to a decrease in effectiveness of mailouts and flyers, rather than distributing a large number of AEA bulletins in coffee houses and similar establishments (as initially proposed), it should be more effective—not to mention economical and environmentally friendly—to make available a few smartly bound copies for on-premise use only. This is now a key feature of AEA's distribution strategy and is reflected in the budget estimates detailed in Figure 8.

2, In response to several of the conditions (weakening of the environmental movement, decrease in the effectiveness of mailouts and flyers, a depressed provincial economy, and a rise in the use of telecommunications technologies), the telecommunications dimension of AEA should be strengthened. This is now acknowledged in AEA's strategic position, through its Internet offerings, its use of local BBSs, its electronically-linked board, and its proposed AEA Online Resource Centre.

3. In response to a weakening of the environmental movement, the idea of a sustainability fund was forwarded. This fund is now an important part of the proposed AEA budget.

4. In response to a continuing, depressed economic climate in Alberta over the next decade, there are two strategic responses. The first is to keep overhead as low as possible by doing without an office. The second is to design the organization so that it can carry out its mission without direct government and private funding. The budget for AEA as presented in Chapter 3 reflects this.

As now conceived, AEA is a more viable organization. While I suspect that many good strategists informally carry out situational analyses in their heads, the value of the situation-by-situation exposition employed here is that it is explicit and comprehensible. I believe that a planning tool such as this, combined with the strong values commitment of many ENGOs, has potential to strengthen these organizations.

In this chapter each of the six key driving forces was considered in isolation. A more detailed—and lengthy—analysis would consider and document how the respective forces are often interrelated and interdependent. This was omitted here in the interest of brevity and in the spirit of Mintzberg who states that smart strategists appreciate that they cannot always be smart enough to think through everything in advance—there comes a time to act. In the next chapter, an Action Plan is presented.

5. ACTION PLAN

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an action plan that outlines steps necessary to bring this Project to fruition. It is intended to serve as a guide for myself and the other individuals who will help form AEA. The Plan establishes a framework for action. The actions outlined on the pages that follow will move the proposed organization toward implementation.

Each listed action includes an explanation and rationale so that it is clear why the action is necessary. Also, where necessary, essential background information which underlies an action is provided. Part of the reason for providing this is so that individuals unfamiliar with the details of the proposed organization better understand why a particular action is included. The overall flow and organization of sections within this action plan were influenced by relevant literature, particularly the book <u>Forming and Managing a Non-Profit Organization in Canada</u> (1986) by Flora MacLeod.

The Plan is divided into two phases. A total of twenty-eight actions are presented, thirteen in Phase I and fifteen in Phase II. Phase I covers what needs to be done prior to the formal formation of AEA; Phase II covers the actual formation of AEA: creating a board of directors, incorporating as a non-profit society, recruitment of volunteers, and other such tasks. Included in both phases of this action plan are provisos relating to possible future changes in the organization's internal and external environment.

At this point, I should clarify my role in AEA. If this Project is going to be more than just a hypothetical academic exercise, I will need to play a major role in the formation of the organization. This I welcome, and at minimum, I should see AEA through to the stage where it is fully operational.

Action Plan - Summary Sheet

Phase I

- ❑ Assemble the founding committee
- ❑ Determine how the founding committee will operate
- ❑ Review and revise the proposed organization
- ❑ Formalize mission and goals
- ❑ Confirm how AEA will operate
- ❑ Review budget
- ❑ Determine production and printing methods
- ❑ Determine how best to distribute the AEA bulletin
- ❑ List and contact potential permanent and temporary partner organizations
- ❑ List and contact places where the AEA bulletin can be made available
- ❑ Obtain a pledge of participation from fifty individuals
- ❑ Define the roles and responsibilities of board members
- ❑ Reflect back on Phase I

Phase II

- ❑ Create a board
- ❑ Create a manual of the board
- ❑ Outline underlying assumptions, values and beliefs
- ❑ Form necessary subcommittees
- ❑ Recruit volunteers
- ❑ Incorporate as a non-profit society
- ❑ Register as a charitable organization
- ❑ Open a bank account
- ❑ Sign on partner organizations
- ❑ Meet with other players
- ❑ Enlist general members
- ❑ Secure finances
- ❑ Plan the first bulletin
- ❑ Determine monitor and evaluation means
- ❑ Reflect back on Phase II

Thirteen actions comprise Phase I. Most pertain to the overall objective of moving the proposed organization forward to the point where it can be formally launched. With the exception of the first action (assembling a founding committee), all Phase I actions are the responsibility of the founding committee, a group of approximately five volunteers willing to further the proposed organization.

Action 1: Assemble the founding committee

In addition to myself, AEA requires the contribution and commitment of other individuals to succeed. The first step in Phase I is to assemble a group of people who also see value in the proposed organization and are willing to serve as members of a founding committee. (As the first member of the founding committee, assembling the group would be my responsibility.) The founding committee would be responsible for finalizing and formalizing much of what was put forth in Chapter 3.

Five people is an appropriate size for a founding committee. Since members of the founding committee often go on to form the first board of directors, it is desirable that represented within this committee are individuals with legal, financial, organizational, media and computer skills. Also, included should be individuals who have third sector experience. The committee will require self-motivated individuals who work well as part of a team.

Serving on a founding committee requires a substantial commitment of time and energy by the participant. In order to complete the actions in Phase I, each member of the founding committee needs to be able to commit approximately ten to fifteen hours of their time a month for a period of two months. While this document gives the organization a solid start, the total amount of time required for executing a project such as this should not be underestimated. My responsibility is to make certain that prospective founding committee members are fully aware of the time and energy commitment involved.

To find suitable individuals to serve on the founding committee, I will rely largely on my contacts within the ENGO community. Each prospective member of the founding committee will be given a copy of this document to help her make an informed choice of whether or not she wishes to participant in the venture. Once founding committee members are found, the next step is to meet as a group, get to know each other, and collectively decide how the group will function. This could be accomplished well in a retreat setting.

Action 2: Determine how the founding committee will operate

In order for the founding committee to function in an efficient and effective manner, it is necessary for the committee to collectively answer the following questions.

Who will chair the meetings?

Who will take the minutes?

Who will keep the books?

How will decisions be made?

Who will draft documents?

What constitutes a quorum?

How will disagreements be resolved?

How often will the committee meet?

At what time will the committee meetings be held and where?

How long will the meetings run?

Who will draw up a work plan?

What other time demands do committee members have?

Action 3: Review and revise the proposed organization

My vision for AEA, as outlined in this document, has been influenced and shaped by a number of factors, including certain individuals (e.g., friends, my Master's Degree Supervisory Committee, and representatives of the ENGO community). It can be expected that other members of the founding committee will also have new and important ideas to offer. For this reason it is important at this stage to review and, as necessary, revise the proposed organization as a group in order to assure that the committee genuinely has a common vision to work toward.

(It will be important to review and revise the proposed organization for another reason as well: though I am eager to initiate the proposed organization I am uncertain as to when I can free up a block of time necessary to do so. During the time lapsed, material presented in both Chapter 3 and 4 could be somewhat dated. Hence, it would be prudent for the founding committee, as a whole, to review and then revise the proposed organization as necessary to ensure it is still a valid proposition.)

The review and revision process also plays an important role in terms of group dynamics. A careful examination of the proposed organization as a group will help to ensure that founding committee members consider and acknowledge important aspects of AEA at an early stage. For this process, information presented in previous chapters of this document will serve well as a departure point for discussion.

Action 4: Formalize mission and goals

AEA's mission, as presented in Chapter 3, is to make citizen advocacy convenient, practical and effective for Albertans concerned about their environment. For reasons similar to those expressed in Action 3, it may be necessary to adjust the mission statement according to the outcome of the reviewed and revised process. A consensus must also be reached by the founding committee regarding a set of specific goals such as the number of general members who will be recruited in the first year.

Action 5: Confirm how AEA will operate

Overhead is a problem for many ENGOs. By taking advantage of low-cost services and technologies (e.g., voice mail and E-mail), it is now feasible for organizations to operate effectively and efficiently without offices. For a small, volunteer-supported organization such as AEA, this would appear to a good option. It would be prudent, however, to list the expenditures related to this proposition in order to confirm its validity.

Action 6: Review budget

Review AEA's budget estimates (Figure 8, Chapter 3) and ensure that these estimates are still sound. At this point, if a small interim budget is required to facilitate the completion of Phase I actions, this should be addressed.

Action 7: Determine production and printing methods

Determine how best to produce the bulletin. By produce, I mean word process and format using computer software and hardware. Also, is the design for the bulletin presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 7) a good one? How could it be improved? Decisions must be made by the founding committee as a whole regarding these issues. Similarly, it must be determined how best to print the bulletin. There are a number of options to be considered. These include (1) contracting printing out to a commercial printer, and (2) working out an agreement with another organization to use their printing equipment.

Action 8: Determine how best to distribute the bulletin

For distribution, there are several possible options. General members could be mailed, faxed or E-mailed their issues of the bulletin; the distribution nodes, where hard copies of the bulletin will be made available, could receive their issues by mail or, if feasible, hand delivered by volunteers. The founding committee will select the best option.

Action 9: List and contact potential permanent and temporary partner organizations

List Alberta ENGOs who are potential participants in AEA. Divide this list into two types of organizations: (1) those who, based and their size and focus, might make occasional submissions to AEA's bulletin (temporary partners); and, (2) those who might submit regularly to each issue (permanent partners). From the list, target organizations whose participation would help maximize AEA's success. Of particular importance is the selection of permanent partner organizations; ideally, they should have worked with each other in the past (Scott-Brown pers. comm. 1993).

Contact the target organizations and explain what AEA has to offer. Determine their level of interest. At this stage, a provisional commitment to participate in AEA by three prospective permanent partner organizations and six temporary partners should be secured. (This is the minimum level of participation needed for AEA to operate successfully for one year.)

Action 10: List and contact places where the AEA bulletin can be made available

List the possible places in Alberta such as coffee houses and like establishments where the bulletin can be made available for display and perusal by members of the public. Prioritize this list, selecting thirty of the most promising places; then, contact these places and secure, if possible, a commitment in principle from them to participate.

Action 11: Obtain a pledge of participation from fifty individuals

This serves as a an initial, important litmus test to determine whether the organization as conceived can succeed. An effective way to complete this action would be for the five members of the founding committee each to secure a pledge of participation from 10 individuals. These individuals could be family, friends, work colleagues, whomever. This would result in a potential start-up membership base of fifty people when the organization is formed in Phase II.

Action 12: Define the roles and responsibilities of board members

The first action of Phase II is to assemble a board of directors. In preparation for this, each position on the board should be well defined. Persons interested in positions of the board need to know what the positions entail; they need to know what they are committing to. In small nonprofit organizations certain routine tasks of the board are often shared. For example, though the president of the board would normally be responsible for chairing meetings, this task can be shared with other board members. This also applies to taking minutes, normally the responsibility of the secretary.

Action 13: Reflect back on Phase I

Before continuing on to Phase II, it would be valuable to reflect back on Phase I. What has been learned? How did the founding committee perform? What has changed? Is there enough support to justify moving to Phase II? What improvements can be made? Having successfully completed this final step of Phase I, the second phase can then commence.

Phase II covers the actual formation of AEA. The first actions of Phase II include creating a board and making explicit the values and beliefs which underlie AEA. The next set of actions are operational in nature, and many of these are extensions of Phase I actions. For example, a firm commitment to participate in AEA needs to be secured in Phase II from Alberta ENGOs who, in Phase I, expressed their initial interest.

Before Phase II actions commence, Phase I should be reviewed to ensure that all new directions and developments that arose there are accounted for in the second phase of this plan. This establishes a solid bridge between Phase I and Phase II and ensures that the actions in both parts of the plan are well integrated.

For the purpose of continuity, the founding committee is responsible for executing the first action of Phase II, the creation of the board. Thereafter, other tasks will be the responsibility of the board, or committees created by the board. Like the founding committee, all board positions would be voluntary.

Action 1: Create a board

A board ensures the smooth operation of an organization. Its function is to provide continuity and accountability for an organization, and to assign responsibility for tasks. It also serves as a forum for decision-making and settling disputes. The creation of a board for AEA is the final responsibility of the founding committee. Once created, the founding committee will then dissolve, transferring responsibilities to the board. Founding committee members, having by this stage developed a thorough knowledge of the organization, would be a tremendous resource, and should be encouraged to sit on the board. Moreover, they provide an important link between Phase I and Phase II, and the smooth execution of this plan would likely be greatly enhanced if at least a few members of the founding committee joined the board.

Creation of a board is a requirement for registration under the Societies Act of Alberta. Registration under this act offers several advantages. Assuming that the organization is properly constituted and managed, members of the board would not be personally liable for debts incurred by the organization. Also, once registered as a society under the Act, members are not personally liable for actions of the organization. Hence, for example, if a suit was launched against AEA for statements printed in the bulletin, under most circumstances the individuals who helped produce the bulletin would not be personally liable for the statements.

Since AEA would be a small, highly-focused organization, a small board would be suitable—unnecessarily large boards can impair action. Most boards, at minimum, have a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Other positions can be created as well. In AEA, a position on the board will be created for the permanent partner organizations to ensure that their interests and concerns as major stake-holders are adequately represented.

It is desirable to have a well-rounded board. People having media, legal, financial, organizational, computer and other such skills are very valuable. Additionally, members of the board should function well as a team. Since a bulletin will be the main output of the organization, ideally one or more individuals should be familiar with document design and graphic arts.

AEA's proposed board would consist of (1) an executive committee, (2) four subcommittees, and (3) a council for AEA permanent partner organizations. The executive committee, in keeping with the lean nature of the organization, would have five members; the subcommittees would have two or three members, depending on responsibilities and workload. The executive committee and the four subcommittees would constitute the **AEA Core Group,** which would number approximately ten people. Last, a council of permanent partner organizations would also be represented on AEA's board.

The four suggested AEA subcommittees are (1) a committee responsible for the recruitment of members and volunteers, including new board members **(membership and volunteer committee);** (2) a **finance and funding committee;** (3) a committee responsible for producing and distributing AEA's bulletin **(bulletin committee);** and, (4) a **special projects committee.** Members of the executive committee should chair these four subcommittees. This helps to ensure good coordination between the executive committee and the subcommittees. The finance and funding committee should be chaired by the treasurer; for reasons that will become obvious later, the president should chair the special projects committee for the duration of Phase II.

It is envisioned that much of the business of the board will be conducted electronically, using affordable telecommunications technologies (computers, modems and telephone lines). Part of the reason for this is to familiarize board members with telecommunications technologies, an important dimension of the proposed organization. Also, an on-line approach would allow for board members to be from locations across the Province, not just Calgary or Edmonton.

Initially, the Core Group's workload will be substantial. It is estimated that ten to fifteen hours a month for a period of three months is the initial time commitment required to carry out the actions of Phase II; once completed, the time commitment will be considerably less, perhaps four to eight hours a month.

Action 2: Create a manual of the board

A board manual is a simple and effective means for organizing information essential to the good management and operation of an organization. At this stage, earlier generated information such as this document, mission statement, summary of activities of the founding committee, list of board positions and their corresponding responsibilities, organizational chart, and information about board members should be included. Later such information as AEA's articles of incorporation, and guiding assumptions, values and beliefs can be added. (Normally, the secretary of the board is responsible for organizing and updating the board manual.) Once available, each member of the board should be provided with the manual. It should also be made available to general members upon request.

Action 3: Outline underlying assumptions, values and beliefs

At this point in the formation of the organization, the underlying assumptions, values and beliefs embodied in AEA should be made explicit by the members of the board. This could be accomplished through a simple list-generating exercise. Once generated, documented and added to board manual, the list of basic assumptions, values and beliefs is useful as a navigational instrument should the organization ever find itself adrift; also, it provides a good reference for people wanting to know more about the organization.

Action 4: Form necessary subcommittees

Prior to carrying out the next set of actions, the subcommittees mentioned in Action 1 should be formed, and their specific duties and responsibilities established. Once again, the four suggested subcommittees are:

1. Membership and volunteer committee

2. Finance and funding committee

3. Bulletin committee

4. Special projects committee

As mentioned earlier, members of the executive should ideally chair each of the four suggested subcommittees.

Action 5: Recruit volunteers

So far, a small number of individuals, the executive, have been responsible for the actions in Phase II. To avoid overloading the executive and to try to involve more people, now would be an logical time to recruit more volunteers. This would be the first task of the membership and volunteer committee. All

committees will require at least one or two additional individuals to assist in the completion of their respective Phase II actions (the specific tasks of each subcommittee are explained in greater detail later.)

Action 6: Incorporate as a non-profit society in Alberta

Action 1 included a brief discussion of why it is beneficial for AEA to incorporate. To reiterate, incorporation under the Societies act of Alberta limits (but does not eliminate) personal liability of directors and volunteers for actions carried out in the name of the organization. The Special Projects Committee, ideally chaired by the president of the board, would be responsible for undertaking the incorporation of the proposed organization.

Incorporation as a society in Alberta is a relatively straightforward procedure. Necessary documents are secured, a name search is performed, by-laws are established, and then the completed paper work is submitted with a payment of $50.00 to a designated office of the provincial government. A summary of the main steps of incorporation for AEA, as set out in the Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs document <u>Societies Act Information</u> (1990), follows.

1. Secure necessary documents

Two documents need to be obtained. One, a "Request for Corporate Services" form and, two, "The Societies Act Application". Both are very simple one-page forms. On the latter, the objectives of the society are listed. (In Calgary, these forms can be obtained from the office of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at 407-2nd Street SW. Calgary.)

2. Reserve a name

Once a name has been selected, an Alberta Search Report must be obtained. The Corporate Registry uses the search report to determine whether the proposed name is available and can be reserved for the applicant. At time of writing, this fee was about $80.

3. Draft a set of by-laws

The incorporation process in Alberta requires that an organization applying under the Societies Act submit a set of by-laws which set out how the proposed organization will operate. To make the task of drafting by-laws easier, the Alberta Corporate Registry makes available a simple set of by-laws which an organization may adopt or adapt. If an organization does not wish to use these by-laws, it is free to draft its own. In this case, the by-laws must include information relating to the following topic areas: membership, withdrawal of membership, meetings, directors and officers, exercise of borrowing powers, audit of accounts, custody and use of the seal of the society; altering, rescinding

and adding by-laws; preparation and custody of minutes and other books and records; and, inspection of books and records by members.

4. Submit the necessary documents

Once the by-laws have been established, these need to be submitted with the other aforementioned documents and fees. When the documents are approved, a Certificate of Incorporation is issued, providing proof of incorporation under the Societies Act of Alberta. This completes the incorporation process.

Action 7: Register as a charitable organization

Registering as a charity with the federal government offers several advantages. Once registered, donations to AEA would then be tax deductible for the donee. This provides incentive for people to contribute monies to the organization. Other advantages include exemption from taxation under Part I of the Income Tax Act and possible exemption from other taxes (e.g., federal and provincial sales tax, excise tax, etc.)

Action 8: Open a bank account

Certain members of the board, including but not limited to the treasurer and president, will need to be able to access and allocate funds of the organization. For this purpose a bank account should be opened and signing authority for certain individuals approved. This minor but important task should be the responsibility of the Funding and Finance Committee.

Action 9: Sign on partner ENGOs

Another task of the Special Projects Committee is to again contact the permanent and temporary partner organizations who, in Phase I, expressed their initial interest in participating in AEA. At this point, they can be informed about progress so far: the completion of Phase I, the formation of the board, AEA's incorporation and the recruitment of more volunteers. If the partner organizations are still interested in participating in AEA, they now would need to make a commitment in this respect. The Special Projects Committee needs to confirm the commitment of at least three permanent partner organizations and one temporary partner to participate in AEA before it should proceed.

Part of the permanent partner's commitment to participate should require half payment on a year's membership (as a permanent partner), totaling $ 240. As indicated in Chapter 3, a temporary partner organization pays $100 to participate in one issue of the bulletin. With the minimum participation requirement of three permanent partners and one temporary in the first issue of the bulletin, this would generate a total of $820: these monies are an important initial source of funding.

At this point, and in coordination with the partner organizations, a target date for the first issue of the bulletin should be established.

Action 10: Meet with other players

The other key participants in AEA are the establishments (mainly coffee houses) where the bulletin will be made available for perusal. Like the partner organizations, their commitment to participate needs to be confirmed.

Action 11: Enlist general members

Action 11 in Phase I required that a pledge of participation from 50 individuals be secured. These individuals would now need to be again contacted, reminded of their pledge, and encouraged to become general members. If sixty percent of the original group of fifty agrees to become general members, paying sixteen dollars in membership dues, this would result in a start up membership base of thirty individuals, generating $480 of revenue. (Like the permanent partner membership dues, these monies too, will serve as an important source of funding at the start up stage until more members can be recruited.)

Action 12: Secure finances

Based on the distribution strategies outlined in Chapter 3, expenditures bimonthly would total approximately $600. AEA's start-up funds, combining the $820 in Action 9 and the $480 in Action 11, would total $1300. This amount is sufficient to sustain the organization for four months. During this period, more general members need to be recruited if AEA's finances are going to work as proposed.

Action 13: Plan the first bulletin

The Bulletin Committee would now need to begin to plan for the first issue. As a result of Action 7 and 8 in Phase I, the best formatting and printing option would have by now been finalized. Further important considerations include the following.

1. Is the general membership list in order and in computer database form?

2. When is the deadline for submissions for permanent and temporary partners?

3. Who will be responsible for computer layout work?

4. Once printed, who will be responsible for sending it to general members?

5. How will the bulletin be delivered to the coffee houses and like establishments?

6. How many copies will be made available at these places?

7. If the bulletin is going to be made available electronically, who will be responsible for organizing this?

Action 14: Determine monitor and evaluation means

To determine how AEA is performing as an organization and whether its mission and goals are being accomplished, it is necessary to devise simple means for monitoring and evaluation. In the context of AEA, monitoring is the collection of information pertaining to the performance of the organization; evaluation involves passing a judgment on the performance of the organization based on the information collected, perhaps on a annual or biannual basis. It would be the responsibility of the Special Projects Committee to determine appropriate means for monitoring and evaluating AEA. These means might range from phone surveys to detailed written surveys involving the AEA membership.

Action 15: Reflect back on Phase II

Similar to the final action of Phase I, the final action of Phase II is to reflect back and assess such things as what was learned, how the organization performed, where the organization stands, and what improvements can be made. Having completed this final action, AEA should be up and running.

6. CONCLUSION

This Project's primary objective was to design an innovative ENGO in Alberta whose goal is to foster public interest and participation in environmental decision-making through education and peaceful, effective action such as letter writing. The output was to be background research and plans for a well conceived, implementable environmental organization for Alberta. Were these objectives achieved?

I believe that the first part of the Project's primary objective—to design an innovative environmental NGO in Alberta—was achieved. In the context of ENGOs in Alberta, I feel that the organization which was designed is innovative for the following reasons.

1. It fills a void. Currently no such organization exists in Alberta.

2. It presents an opportunity for ENGO collaboration and cooperation by involving partner organizations.

3. It employs unique, cost-effective distribution strategies.

4. It recognizes an important technological trend, telecommunications, and positions itself to take advantage of this potentially powerful lever.

5. It makes action convenient by offering a clear, easy to understand product and program.

6. It is a lean organization that requires minimal resources to start up and operate.

With regard to the second part of the Project's primary objective, I am less certain that this, the goal of fostering public interest and participation in environmental decision-making, will be achieved through the organization I propose. While fostering public interest and participation in environmental decision-making is a worthy goal, it is one that would be difficult for AEA to achieve. AEA does encourage people to exercise their democratic right to express their opinion regarding important environmental issues in an effort to influence decision-making; it would, however, fall short in promoting real public interest and participation in environmental decision-making. I say this not to belittle AEA as conceived, but to point out that the original goal formulated before this Project began is now not a realistic goal for the organization. A more realistic goal would be, as stated above, to encourage people to <u>express</u> their opinion regarding important environmental issues in an effort to influence decision-making.

I feel that I deliver the proposed MDP output: background research and plans for a well-conceived, implementable environmental organization for Alberta. The background research is presented in various parts of this document, mainly in Chapter 2. I believe that Chapters 3, **The Proposed Organization**, guided by the situational analysis in Chapter 4, and Chapter 5, **An Action Plan**, represent well-conceived and implementable plans.

This Project developed in many ways I did not expect at its outset. I originally saw an ENGO that would reach non-members through the mass distribution of flyers. I saw an organization that would have to aggressively court funders to secure finances. I saw an organization working independently of other organizations. I saw an organizational which required a large number of volunteers to operate. The organization proposed in Chapter 3 is quite different. There will be no mass distribution of flyers; instead, a smartly bound bulletin will be made available at appropriate establishments. There is no need to aggressively court funders; the organization as proposed is largely self-financing. The organization will not work independently of other organizations; it is structured as a partnership, directly involving other organizations. And, a large number of volunteers will not be required to operate the organization; approximately ten volunteers will be needed.

Another unexpected development was the proposed role of telecommunications technologies. The more I read and learned about this tool, the more convinced I became that it could be used to make AEA a more effective organization. In Chapter 4's situational analysis, telecommunications appeared as a way to (1) lessen the dependency on volunteers, (2) reduce operating costs, and (3) service and include people from geographic locations throughout the province. As now conceived, AEA would carry out much of its business using the Internet. Through the Internet the AEA Core Group would meet and coordinate much of its activities; also general members would have the opportunity to discuss issues if they wished. In the future, an AEA Online Environmental Resource Centre is envisioned that would serve as a gateway and directory to many other public environmental offerings on the Internet: relevant electronic journals, discussion groups, mailing lists, conferences, E-mail addresses of key decision-makers, etc.

Although AEA would largely be an on-line organization, it would also offer its services in conventional ways (paper copies and Canada Post) so as to remain accessable to a wide constituency.

The above paragraphs speak to the evolutionary nature of this Project. AEA can be expected to continue to grow and mature both before and after implementation. The Action Plan outlines a process that will see the organization as proposed reviewed and, as necessary, revised to assure that it is

still a valid proposition. In this sense, this document represents a departure point rather than a destination.

Currently it would appear that an organization such as AEA does not exist in Alberta or elsewhere. Elements of AEA, however, do exist within the structures of other social change organizations, some of whom operate in Alberta. From Amnesty International comes the idea of presenting a selection of well-formatted and organized issues. Also from Amnesty International comes the idea of using letter-writing as the main action vehicle. From 20/20 Vision comes the ideas of (1) making explicit what the organization expects of members and what members can expect of the organization, and (2) appealing to people who are concerned but have high demands of their time. From many organizations comes the idea of circulating action alerts. And, last, from Earthtrust comes the idea of using the leverage of telecommunication technologies. New, however, is the idea of forming a mutual benefit association between existing organizations, a group of members (AEA general members) and the AEA organization itself.

If AEA succeeds, it could prove to be an organizational model that may have applications elsewhere. It is not hard to image similar organizations in other provinces or in other spheres of society such as international development or education. This is perhaps the ultimate test: whether, after implementation, it can inspire the formation of other similar organizations, just as other organizations have inspired this one.

I began this Project with reference to David Korten's book Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda, the book I chanced to find in the Philippines, and the book which helped me to better understand civil society, the third sector, NGOs, and the importance of voluntary action. Given the critical role this book played in helping me to develop a framework for thinking about my Project, I feel compelled to close with a final quote from Korten (1990, 216).

> In the end, our future depends on millions of citizen volunteers, each serving as a center of voluntary energy, adding strength to a dynamic, evolving people's movement. Each individual can and does make a difference. Each helps to shape the global consciousness and the collective pattern of behavior by which we define our relationship with our host planet.

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