Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Environment and History (journal)

"Confronting the Pitfalls of Current Environmental History: An Argument for an Organisational Approach"

Uekoetter, Frank

Uekoetter, Frank. "Confronting the Pitfalls of Current Environmental History: An Argument for an Organisational Approach." *Environment and History* 4, no. 1, (Feb., 1998): 31–52. doi:10.3197/096734098779555745 . The essay outlines and criticises three prominent features of current environmental history writing: the idea of history as negative progress, the rhetoric of 'on the one hand' - 'on the other hand,' and the use of the term 'capitalism.' It is argued that these notions impede rather than help historical analysis and should be abandoned in favour of more differentiated concepts. As an alternative, the essay proposes focusing on the process of organising responses to perceived environmental problems. This process is subdivided into six stages, with special obstacles and problems to be solved at each of them. The 'organisational approach' offers a useful analytic tool for understanding the rationale behind the seemingly irrational, and allows analysis of the degree in which societies were able to control and regulate their environmental impact. After discussing the advantages of this approach over current ways of writing environmental history, the essay concludes with a brief reflection on how an organisational approach would allow historians to contribute to contemporary environmental discussions in a more productive way. All rights reserved. © 1998 The White Horse Press

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/uekoetter-4-1.pdf

Related links:

- *Environment and History* at The White Horse Press
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EH.html

Websites linked in this text:

- http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096734098779555745

Environment and History (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Confronting the Pitfalls of Current Environmental History: An Argument for an Organisational Approach"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/2953
Print date: 15 November 2026 16:09:25