Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Environmental Values (journal)

"A Rhetorical Critique of 'Nonmarket' Economic Valuations for Natural Resources"

Peterson, Markus J., and Tarla Rai Peterson

Peterson, Markus J., and Tarla Rai Peterson. "A Rhetorical Critique of 'Nonmarket' Economic Valuations for Natural Resources" *Environmental Values* 2, no. 1, (1993): 47–65. doi:10.3197/096327193776679990 .

Various "nonmarket" economic valuation methods have been used to compute "total" value of nonmarketed natural resources and related recreation. We first outline the history of these valuation techniques and use the Exxon Valdez disaster response and the valuation of whooping cranes, an endangered species, as examples of how these tools can constrain policy. We then explain how, by excluding non-economic social spheres, economic valuation techniques produce a terministic screen that deforms policy makers' vision of the ecological problems faced by society. Using Luhmann's functionalist social theory, we demonstrate that when natural resource managers privilege economic motives, they trivialize other social functions such as education, politics, religion and law. This process presents a significant ethical dilemma for democracies by first naturalizing, then ethicizing, existing patterns of domination.

— Text from The White Horse Press website

All rights reserved. © 1993 The White Horse Press

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/peterson_2_1.pdf

Related links:

- Article on the official website
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EV/EV204.html
- The White Horse Press
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/

Environmental Values (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"A Rhetorical Critique of 'Nonmarket' Economic Valuations for Natural Resources"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5489
Print date: 09 November 2026 11:09:54

Websites linked in this text:

- http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096327193776679990
- http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EV/EV204.html

Environmental Values (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"A Rhetorical Critique of 'Nonmarket' Economic Valuations for Natural Resources"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5489
Print date: 09 November 2026 11:09:54