

WHAT IS A HEALTHY WATERSHED?

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> A healthy watershed is one that is in tune with a healthy Biosphere.

> This means that wastes produced by individuals of each species in the

> watershed are used locally as resources by individuals of other

> species in the watershed. Wastes do not continuously accumulate in the

> watershed, nor do exotic species knowingly move to other watersheds

> except when essential to reproduction as in the case of migratory

> species or spores distributed

by

> air.

> Members of our species do not follow these rules. Historically, wastes

> have been exported downwind and downstream as long as the polluters

> can get away with it. The result has been an explosion of human

> population and technology as a double exponential in which numbers

> double over shortening intervals of time. Pollution has increased in

> scale from local

to

> continental (through the continued use of persistent toxic chemicals,

> redistribution of species, and the discharge of acids into air) and

> even become global (through discharges of radioactive isotopes, CFCs

> and greenhouse gases, and changes in habitat leading to the extinction

> of

other

> species). We cannot survive if such rates of growth persist. Yet, the

> urge for economic growth shows no signs of abating. What will be the

> likely end result of all this? My guess is that the short-term desire

> for continued economic growth, through its complementary opposite of

> long-term ecological balance, will inexorably force humanity

to

> co-evolve with the Biosphere. If that happens there will be a parallel

> evolution of the human self toward more humane treatment of our

> biospheric kin, with declines in the rates of extinction of other

> species. This result, which may seem improbable given the present

> unruly state of international affairs, is actually quite predictable.

> In the

1960s

> when a tidal wave of environmental concern over air and water

> pollution swept over the Earth, there were no citizen groups or

> government

departments

> for environmental protection. Because of the continuing urge for
> economic growth another tidal wave, biospheric in scale, is in the
> making. The
vast
> networks of citizen organizations now in place will force governments
> to co-evolve with the Biosphere. A planetary civilization will likely
> come
into
> being.
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