

Environment of Change: The Importance of Grassroots Activism in Crafting a Larger Movement

Exhibition on Display From December 2 to December 15, 2019

Reading Room, Archives and Special Collections in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center

University of Connecticut

Curated by Mackenzie Caron

Historical archives provide students and researchers with a variety of source materials for investigating contemporary social issues and the development of social movements. In my exhibit I explore environmental grassroots activism, utilizing archival materials including pamphlets, posters, zines, periodicals, underground press publications, artist's books, and organizational records to highlight environmental issues of the 1970s and 1980s and illustrate how grass roots organizations responded to the political and social pressures of their time. I also provide examples of how contemporary organizations and activists are responding to environmental changes and crises of the present day.

The 1970s and 80s saw the birth of the environmental movement we know today, as Deborah Lynn Guber explains in *The Grassroots of a Green Revolution*. That period represented a coalescence of various grassroots efforts throughout the United States. The sources in this exhibition demonstrate the different approaches and viewpoints taken during those decades on environmental protection. Many methods of environmental activism were employed, including conservation and regulation both by protest and by lobbying, education through protest and distribution of independent presses, and spreading awareness through artistic projects. These efforts were aided by an independent press that allowed for a free exchange of ideas outside of commercial news outlets. The viewpoints within the exhibit vary wildly, as does the expertise, but in all of these sources there is a commitment to preserving our natural resources and the tools

of protest and free communication by which we protect them. Together, these sources demonstrate the ways grassroots activism can work effectively to create change. The sources consulted in the creation of this exhibition are listed in an annotated bibliography.