

Environmental Worldviews

There are three perspectives in how we should deal with issues of pollution, resource overconsumption, and loss of biodiversity.

- **planetary management**
- **Stewardship**
- **environmental wisdom**



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Planetary Management

- As the planet's most important species, we are in charge of the earth.
- Because of our ingenuity and technology we will not run out of resources.
- The potential for economic growth is essentially unlimited.
- Our success depends on how well we manage the earth's life-support systems mostly for our benefit

Stewardship

- We are the planet's most important species but we have an ethical responsibility to care for the rest of nature.
- We will probably not run out of resources, but they should not be wasted.
- We should encourage environmentally beneficial forms of economic growth and discourage environmentally harmful forms.
- Our success depends on how well we manage the earth's life-support systems for our benefit and for the rest of nature

Environmental Wisdom

- Nature exists for all species and we are not in charge of the earth.
- Resources are limited, should not be wasted, and are not all for us.
- We should encourage earth-sustaining forms of economic growth and discourage earth degrading forms.
- Our success depends on learning how the earth sustains itself and integrating such lessons from nature into the ways we think and act

- Each of these worldviews acknowledges that the Earth is a **closed system**, meaning matter does not enter or leave it in large amounts.
 - Resources are finite.
 - Wastes do not “go away”.
- These understandings form the basis for understanding and solving each of the issues within environmental science.
- Need to focus on
 - Planetary Management – **of human growth**
 - Environmental Wisdom – wise use of our natural resources



Earthrise, taken by astronaut Frank Borman in 1968, during the Apollo 8 mission.

What is Our Greatest Environmental Problem?

- Disease
- Overpopulation
- Water Shortages
- Climate Changes
- Biodiversity Loss
- Poverty
- Malnutrition

Solutions

- Current Emphasis (Reactive)
- Sustainability Emphasis (Proactive)

