



LOBBYISTS

Greenpeace

By Jimmy Biblarz

“After all, sustainability means running the global environment - Earth Inc.-like a corporation: with depreciation, amortization and maintenance accounts. In other words, keeping the asset whole, rather than undermining your natural capital.”

-Maurice Strong, former under-secretary general of the UN

Introduction

Greenpeace is one of the world’s largest environmental lobbying groups, boasting more than 2.8 million members worldwide and regional offices in 41 countries, with its headquarters located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Despite being a **nonprofit organization**, its annual revenues total over \$400 million, making it one of the best-funded not-for-profit organizations in the world. The organization’s guiding mission is to “ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity.” Specifically, it deals with issues such as global warming, deforestation, overfishing, commercial whaling, and nuclear proliferation. To meet these goals, Greenpeace engages in lobbying, research, and direct action in the form of demonstrations and protests. While its goals sound very well intentioned and noble, the organization has frequently found itself in hot water with federal governmental organizations. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Security Agency (NSA) have accused Greenpeace of engaging in eco-terrorism and other acts of violence. Greenpeace accepts no funding from governments, corporations, or political parties, and it relies strictly upon private donations. It is widely regarded as the most visible and influential environmental organizations in the world. Ships, including the *Rainbow Warrior* and *Rainbow Warrior II*, have historically played and continue to play a major role in the operations and message spreading of Greenpeace.

nonprofit organization—an organization that does not issue stock shares or distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses the funds to help achieve its goals.

History and Guiding Philosophy

Greenpeace was founded in 1971 by a small yet highly motivated group of environmental activists. The group set sail from Vancouver, Canada in a small fishing boat (originally called the *Phyllis Cormack*, later named the “Greenpeace”) headed for Amchitka, Alaska. Their mission was to protest the United States’ resting of nuclear devices in Alaska. It was during the trip that the idea for Greenpeace originated. In addition to being a nuclear testing site, Amchitka was also the last refuge of 3,000 endangered sea otters, bald eagles, and peregrine



falcons. Although the boat was intercepted before it reached the island, and the US still performed the nuclear test, a public outcry ensued. Nuclear testing on Amchitka halted later that year and the island has since been declared a bird and wildlife sanctuary. In the years immediately following the Amchitka incident, Greenpeace expanded its goals beyond nuclear testing to include commercial whaling and toxic waste.

Organizational Logistics

Greenpeace consists of Greenpeace International, based in Amsterdam, with 28 regional offices operating in 45 countries. The regional offices perform largely autonomous work under Greenpeace International's supervision. The members of the board elect the Executive Director. The current Director is Kumi Naidoo and the current Chairperson of the Board is Lalita Ramdas. Each regional office is headed by an executive director elected by a regional Board of Directors. The regional boards each appoint a trustee to the Greenpeace International Annual General Meeting, at which the Board members are elected. Greenpeace's funding comes exclusively from individual supporters and foundations. All major donors are screened to avoid unwanted and controversial donations. Greenpeace engages in significant face-to-face fundraising efforts in which new donors are sought out in public places such as parks, subway stations, and public squares.

Important Issues

Greenpeace International's website states its primary issue advocacy targets are as follows: catalyzing an energy revolution to address the number one threat facing our planet: climate change; defending our oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves; protecting the world's remaining ancient forests which are depended on by many animals, plants and people; working for **disarmament** and peace by reducing dependence on finite resources and calling for the elimination of all nuclear weapons; creating a toxin-free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in today's products and manufacturing; and campaigning for sustainable agriculture by encouraging socially and ecologically responsible farming practices.

disarmament—*the reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons.*

Climate and Energy

Greenpeace has been credited as one of the reasons global warming knowledge spread so quickly throughout the 1980s and 1990s. During this time, public awareness about global climate change grew dramatically, putting increased pressure on elected officials to take steps to

curb potential damages. The organization has also focused on reducing the emission of **chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)** because of their negative contributions to global warming and their deleterious effect on the ozone layer. These efforts mainly targeted the refrigerator industry. Greenpeace has called for greenhouse gas emissions to peak in 2015 and to subsequently decrease to near zero by 2050. How feasible these goals are remains to be seen; given the general stalemate in Congress, these goals are unlikely to be met. Greenpeace recently launched an alternative energy campaign called “Go Beyond Oil” to put pressure on governments that allow oil exploration in their territories.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)—organic compounds widely used as refrigerants, propellants, and solvents that have been phased out of production because of their contribution to ozone depletion.

Nuclear Power

Although the nuclear energy industry is comparatively small, especially in the United States, Greenpeace sees it as a major environmental problem. Greenpeace rejects calls by politicians from both parties to utilize the United States’ nuclear capabilities as an oil substitute. They take particular issue with the ecological damage caused by nuclear facilities, potential health risks associated with nuclear exposure, risks from uranium mining, nuclear weapons proliferation, and unresolved questions concerning nuclear waste. Greenpeace rejects the argument that nuclear power is the answer to global warming and argues instead that wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources remain the best alternatives. Greenpeace has been known to issue provocative anti-nuclear advertisements.

Forest Campaign

Greenpeace views deforestation as a major environmental issue and has called for an end to deforestation by 2020. The organization has publically accused numerous corporations, including Nike and McDonald’s of contributing to the deforestation of South America’s tropical rainforest. Many of these protests have been effective and have resulted in changing company policies regarding deforestation. Greenpeace successfully campaigned for ten years for the European Union (EU) to ban the import of illegal timber.

Whaling

In a scandal that became known as the “Tokyo Two,” in 2008, two Japanese anti-whaling activists stole a case of whale meat from a deposit center in Aomori, Japan. Although not employed by Greenpeace, the two men were affiliated with the organization. Their plan was to expose what they believed to be the embezzlement of whale meat collected during illegal whale hunts. After a short-lived investigation of their claims, the two were arrested and charged with theft and trespassing. Amnesty International, another liberal lobbying group, argued that the arrests of these two men and later raids on the Greenpeace Japan of-

face were meant to intimidate anti-whaling activists and environmental NGOs (non-governmental organizations). In September 2010, the two men were convicted of theft and trespassing.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Greenpeace opposed the use of **genetically modified** food in aid packages to other countries when non-genetically modified food is readily available (this was a particularly important issue concerning aid packages the US sent to Zambia). They argue that those receiving international aid should still have a choice in regards to the foods they consume, hoping that this approach will help develop local agricultural communities that are less reliant on foreign aid. However, they do believe that if famines are so severe that locally grown food is not a genuine alternative, then countries receiving international aid should accept it regardless of whether the aid packages included genetically modified food items. Government leaders in Zambia ultimately went against Greenpeace's advice and refused to accept genetically modified food, despite the rampant famine and malnutrition plaguing the country at the time.

Additionally, Greenpeace opposes the use of "golden rice" in developing rice cultivation, an alleged super-food that, through genetic engineering, is enriched with beta-carotene, a precursor of Vitamin A. Greenpeace does not accept its supposed positive impact on malnutrition and claims that there is little to no evidence to prove its efficacy. Instead, Greenpeace endorses the planting of crops that are naturally nutrient-rich and have proven, established track records of curtailing malnutrition.

Toxic Waste

Every year, Greenpeace releases its "Dirty Laundry" report, detailing which companies cause the most environmental harm. In 2011, Greenpeace accused many of the world's top sportswear brands of releasing toxic waste into some of China's rivers. The report detailed the severity of the water pollution caused by the Chinese textile industry. Scientific analyses from the wastewater from the two main facilities researched in the study indicated the presence of hazardous and persistent hormone distribution chemicals that are dangerous to human health. Some of the companies that obtain raw materials from these two factories include Nike, Adidas, Calvin Klein, Lacoste, Puma, and Abercrombie and Fitch.

genetically modified—*an organism whose genome has been manipulated using modern DNA technology in order to enhance its social, medical, and/or economic value.*

Conclusion

Greenpeace is one of the world's largest and most effective envi-

ronmental lobbying organizations. Boasting hundreds of thousands of members throughout the world, Greenpeace is committed to the ideals of conservation, preservation, and environmental justice. Often resting on the border between acceptable standards for civic protest and political violence, Greenpeace is skilled at gaining national media attention. They frequently walk a fine line between staunch advocacy and eco-terrorism, causing concern and occasionally prompting investigations by governmental agencies. As lobbyists for this organization, you must choose which issues to focus on from amongst Greenpeace's myriad of issue interests. Greenpeace advocates on a host of issues ranging from climate change and energy to food policy and the weaponization of outer space. In this sense, it is an umbrella organization encompassing all policies involving the natural world. However, this wide diversity of policy topics also makes the job of a lobbyist more difficult in that a broader range of congressional committees needs to be influenced in order to promote Greenpeace's policy agenda.

Bibliography

Gough, Miles. "Greenpeace destroy CSIRO wheat GM trial." *Cosmos Online*. 14 July 2011. <<http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/news/4522/greenpeace-targets-csiro-crops>>.

"Greenpeace." Activist Cash. Center for Consumer Freedom. 2011. <http://activistcash.com/organization_overview.cfm/o/131-greenpeace>.

"Greenpeace." *New York Times*. Times Topics: Global Edition. <<http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/organizations/g/greenpeace/index.html?scp=1-spot&sp=greenpeace&st=cse>>.

"Greenpeace." Topics Page. *USA Today*. 2011. <<http://content.usatoday.com/topics/topic/Organizations/Non-profits,+Activist+Groups/Greenpeace>>.

Greenpeace USA. <<http://www.greenpeace.org/use/en/>>.