

"Bioregionalism and Political Ecology: New Theoretical Directions for Regional Geography and Resource-Use Management?"

William T. Hipwell (Department of Geography, Kyungpook National University,
whipwell@knu.ac.kr)

Abstract

In this paper the author surveys the available literature on "bioregionalism", a relatively new intellectual tradition evolved from the North American environmental social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. The so-called "bioregional approach" is gaining acceptance among environmental planners in North America and elsewhere, and has attracted the attention of some geographers. Bioregionalism can be viewed as a proactive approach to environmental management, developed in response to the issues with which political ecologists are normally concerned namely the negative impacts of political and economic factors on ecological processes. Bioregionalism is assessed in light of a recent critique of political ecology, in order to determine whether the bioregional approach as it is currently advocated and practised is sufficiently objective to withstand accusations of bias levelled against political ecology in general. It is argued that bioregionalism represents a theoretical approach with potential application for alternative regional development.