Exploring a Personal Philosophy of Environmental Ethics

ENVS 305 Winter 2014. First essay, 1000 words, 15 points.
Paper copy rough draft due in class Jan 23.
Final draft due Jan 28.
Turn in rough draft and re-draft outline with final paper copy.

Assignment: What assumptions, beliefs and values compose your environmental ethics, what are their sources, and what are their possible justifications? This essay should attempt to discern and honestly describe the bases of your choices that affect our shared environment – both the human and the non-human parts included in whatever fashion you include them (or not). Your values include aspirations or ideals as well as what you achieve in practice.

Comments for consideration:

1) Exploring your perspective may help you to identify specific beliefs and assumptions.

2) In considering the sources of your ethics, you may look to your personal history. In addition, consider the larger historical context of Western institutions as advanced in readings thus far.

3) Don’t worry about being technically correct in explaining possible justifications. Be honest and reasonable. No one is perfect; that isn’t the point. Where are you today in your understanding of your own convictions?

4) Use examples to illustrate larger ideas or principles, but also use them to explore areas you are not sure about. In this essay it may be as important to explore the question as to answer it.

5) You will probably not be able to be exhaustive in this length paper, so you should formulate your main ideas cogently and concisely.

After receiving peer feedback on your rough draft, create an outline that shows how you will organize your final draft to be more effective. Turn this in with the final paper copy.

All papers should be turned in electronically AND on paper. For the electronic copy, put your name, the class and assignment in the filename (ie, “Jones.ENVS305.first essay.docx”).
Electronic submission: email to Gene.Myers@wwu.edu

See general instructions on papers in syllabus, and rubric on last page of syllabus or Canvas. Additional general paper writing resource: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/