

# Greens Encyclopedia Article

## Greens

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# Greens

The name given to those who engage in **green politics**. The term originated in Germany, where members of the environmentally-oriented Green Party were quickly dubbed *die Grünen*, or "the Greens." In the United States, greens refers not to a particular political party, but to any individual or group making environmental issues the central focus and main political concern. Thus the term covers a wide array of political perspectives and organizations, ranging from moderate or mainstream "light green" groups such as the **Sierra Club** and **Greenpeace** to more militant or "dark green" movements and direct-action organizations such as the **Sea Shepherd Conservation Society** and **Earth First!**, as well as ecofeminists, bioregionalists, social ecologists, and deep ecologists. Greens in the United States are divided over many issues. Some, for example, are in favor of organizing as interest groups to lobby for environmental legislation, while others reject politics in favor of a more spiritual orientation. Some greens (for example, social ecologists and ecofeminists) see their cause as connected to questions of social justice—the elimination of exploitation, militarism, racism, sexism, and so on—while others (deep ecologists, for instance) seek to separate their cause from such humanistic concerns, favoring a biocentric instead of an anthropocentric orientation. Despite such differences, however, all greens agree that the preservation and protection of the natural **environment** is a top priority and a precondition for every other human endeavor.

## See Also

Environmental Ethics; Environmentalism