Afro-environmentalism:  
Black stewardship in the new millennium  
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In the 21st century, societies face serious environmental problems. Black leadership in the environmental arena—stewardship—is vital for successful decision-making that respects all life on the planet, human health, and sustainable economy. Afro-environmentalism will explore how the legacy of the civil rights movement inspires environmental activism, current environmental problems, and how people of African descent are needed to effectively address those problems.

As African-Americans, the civil rights leaders of yesterday gave us an incredible legacy. Men and women fought against oppression and gave their lives for equal treatment, justice, and freedom. Today, environmental problems also include matters of injustice, untruth, and oppression. From air pollution in American urban centers to extraction of natural resources on the continent of Africa, people are suffering while the environment is being eroded at the same time. These conditions give us a unique opportunity to build on the legacy of our forefathers and strive to make a cleaner, healthier world for future generations.

The environmental movement, our families, and our communities need black leaders that are informed of environmental challenges and strive to develop solutions to these challenges.

Key words: environmental, environment, leadership, stewardship, civil rights, movement, justice, legacy
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Presentation Outline

1. Introduction
   a. About me
   b. Importance of environmental protection to the United States.
   c. Interconnectedness of environment, human health, and economy.
   d. Importance of environmental protection to people of African descent (connecting to ideas about the African Diaspora).

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**Figure 1.** Diagram showing connection between environment, economy, and health.

**Figure 2.** Map showing African Diaspora as a result of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade.
2. **Civil Rights Movement empowers us and connects to the Environmental Movement**  
   a. Civil Rights Movement in brief (include black liberation movements in other parts of the world too)  
   b. Origins of the environmental movement  
   c. How the Civil Rights movement/Afro perspective makes us uniquely suited to advocate environmental causes

3. **Environmental problems in the 21st century**  
   a. Climate Change  
   b. Environmental (in)Justice  
      i. NORCO  
      ii. My Clean Water Act case  
      iii. Extraction of Natural Resources (examples from the continent)  
   c. Labor and environmental safety  
      i. Farmworker safety  
      ii. Industrial safety  
   d. Biodiversity loss

4. **Why people of African descent are needed in the world of environmental decision-making**  
   a. Demographic shifts in the US (by 2042 every metropolitan statistical area in the US will be predominantly non-white)  
   b. Bring unique perspective/new ideas  
   c. Draw on legacy of civil rights  
      i. Historic organizations  
      ii. “Creation Care”  
   d. Increased trade with Africa/self-determination

5. **Toolkit for black stewardship**  
   a. Embracing personal responsibility and collective action  
   b. Knowledge is the seed, conditions and action make it grow: “…letting a condition develop in this country which will create a climate that will bring seeds up out of the ground with vegetation on the end of them looking like something these people never dreamed of.”  
   Malcolm X, *It's the ballot or the bullet* (1964).  
   c. Share resources  
      i. Reading list  
      ii. Supporting organizations (local and regional)  
      iii. Developing action plan/task