

# JHES

## Journal for the History of Environment and Society Special issue 'Science and Environmental Activism'

The *Journal for the History of Environment and Society* (JHES) aims to be a leading online and open-access periodical that covers all aspects of environmental history conceived in its broadest sense. The journal encourages high-quality scholarship which focuses on relations between environmental changes and social-historical context. Interregional and international comparative articles receive special attention. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline, papers should be accessible for scholars from all disciplines in the field, which will also ensure their accessibility to a wider audience. Geographically, the Journal focuses primarily – but not exclusively – on North-West Europe (including areas that had historical relations with that broad region). Articles with a more general geographic scope can also be published in the Journal.

More info on JHES: <https://www.brepols.net/series/JHES>

### Call for papers / scope

Environmental activism has a complex and multifaceted relation with science. A growing body of literature explores this relation by introducing concepts from Science and Technology Studies into the field of environmental history (see e.g. Jørgensen, Jørgensen & Pritchard 2013). Perhaps more than any other social movement, the enduring struggle to protect the environment seems to find a strong ally in scientific knowledge and expertise. Issues as disparate as chemical waste, whaling and climate change have probed discussions on different assessments of the probability and magnitude of adverse environmental effects. Environmentalist organizations have often shaped these discussions by either invoking or questioning prevailing expert opinion. Conversely, some actors within the environmental movement have also developed a more critical attitude towards science and (western) scientific practice. Framed as the pawn of vested economic interests, research institutes and scientists have been challenged by activists aiming to address deeper social, political, economic or cultural issues. The worldwide movements

against nuclear power and genetically modified food provide examples of particularly interesting scientific controversies involving activists within the environmental movement.

Similarly, environmentalist values often go hand in hand with the struggle to democratize science and open up the discussion on the value of lay expertise and indigenous knowledges. Activists such as the Brazilian anti-dam protesters have sought to legitimize and contribute to these localized knowledges of nature that sometimes challenge the assumptions built into the generic scientific model.

Throughout history, environmental activism has challenged, produced and advocated scientific knowledge. This special issue of JHES aims to further explore the relation between environmental activism and science and welcomes contributions on topics and questions such as (but not limited to):

- Historical cases exploring the use of scientific knowledge by environmental organizations. How have environmental activists defined and incorporated expertise into their political work?
- How have environmental movements challenged and shaped scientific knowledge in the past? What ideas do these actors hold on the role of science and expertise within activism?
- Studies exploring the role of “activist-scientists” (i.e. experts that have entered the political arena) within and outside of the environmental movement. How can we characterize this type of activism throughout history?
- What can historians learn from the field of Science and Technology studies (STS) for the study of environmentalism?

1 February 2023: deadline for submission of abstract (max. 2 pages)

1 June 2023: deadline for submission of article

Please send your abstract to Christophe Verbruggen (UGent), [christophe.verbruggen@ugent.be](mailto:christophe.verbruggen@ugent.be) or Ishka Desmedt (UGent), [ishka.desmedt@ugent.be](mailto:ishka.desmedt@ugent.be).