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Finding a (Paid) Place in the Green Economy. ~ via Betsy Henshaw

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Working Environment: Interview with Five Boulder-Based Environmental Organizations

I had a plan. I got the graduate degree, four years technical field experience and two years working in the environment abroad. I did everything the people in high places said I should do to get "the job." Then, I fell in love. First, I fell in love with working at [Shambhala Mountain Center](#) and then, to make things even better/worse, I fell in love with a Naropa-bound Nathan.

What is an international environmental policy person to do? In the words of my father, "Get a job." But where? So began my quest: To search out and understand what the countless environmental organizations in Boulder are working on, what working there is like and what organizations want in an employee.

Who: [Global Response/Cultural Survival](#)

I interviewed Paula Palmer, whose Boulder-based organization, Global Response, recently merged with Cultural Survival. Paula has 35 years experience working with indigenous populations in Central America and the United States to defend their rights and protect their lands.

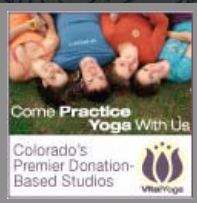
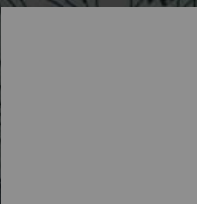
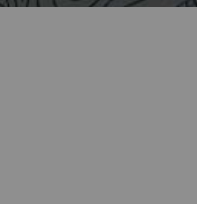
Mission: Partner with indigenous communities worldwide to defend their human rights, protect their lands and natural resources, advocate their right to self-determination, and preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage.

How: Global Response organizes international letter-writing campaigns to help indigenous communities defend themselves and their lands against destructive industrial projects in their territories, especially mining, logging and oil development. The organization issues Action Alerts to both adults and children, offering them a simple but very effective way to stand for justice on the global level.

The Niche: Global Response campaigns link pro-active indigenous communities with pro-active world citizens in collaborative efforts to protect the world's most vulnerable places and peoples. With a success rate of almost 50 percent, Global Response takes David's side against Goliath, and wins.

What's satisfying about your work?

"Offering practical, significant help to indigenous communities all over the world."





What's challenging about your work?

"Helping people see the importance of human cultural diversity as well as biological diversity...(indigenous people) offer the world a multitude of knowledge sets, and the world needs their knowledge now more than ever."

Ways to get involved:

Keep in Touch – Learn about Global Response/Cultural Survival campaigns at their [website](#), and write letters for these campaigns. Sign up on the site to receive email alerts and e-news.

Reach Out Plan – The Western Outreach Committee will meet to organize local events on October 19. Contact Paula Palmer for details at paula@globalresponse.org



Who: American Solar Energy Society

I spoke with Neal Lurie, the Director of Marketing and Communications for the American Solar Energy Society. Neal is a University of Colorado grad who has worked for more than a decade in marketing and leadership in nonprofits, Fortune 500s, and politics.

Mission: Inspire an era of energy innovation and speed the transition to a sustainable energy economy.

How: American Solar is the one stop source for solar energy information. Homeowners, a green collar job searchers, solar enthusiasts and professionals can all get information about solar energy through [American Solar's Solar Today magazine](#), [green homes tours](#) and the cornucopia of information about solar jobs, local solar installers and solar incentives on the [American Solar website](#).

The Niche: American Solar Energy Society has been in the solar business since 1954 and is now the nation's leading professional and grassroots solar association.

What's satisfying about your work?

"...Doing something every day that makes a difference; that saves people money and creates new green jobs. Solar is one of the rare opportunities that you have to address global and local problems..."

What's challenging doing your work?

"[There is] so much opportunity and need in the sector that it can be frustrating not to get involved with everything. [There is] a continuing need to prioritize...It's like drowning in chocolate."

Ways to get involved:

Mingle and Learn – Go to the [National Solar Conference](#) in Phoenix, AZ and rub elbows with everyone on the cutting edge of solar energy technology and the new energy economy.

Be a Joiner – Become a member of the [American Solar Energy Society](#) to get information on new technology, notification of American Solar events and a fancy magazine on solar news and solar energy professionals.

Get a Job – Check out the [Green Start online job board](#) and get to work.



Who: Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC)

I interviewed Spenser Villwock, the Interim Executive Director of the Center for ReSource Conservation. Spenser holds a master's degree in non-profit management, a LEED-AP (Existing Buildings) Accredited Professional, and an undergraduate in English literature. Spenser focuses his current efforts at the CRC on maximizing conservation program impact.

Mission: Provide programs and services that empower individuals to turn natural resource conservation beliefs into action in their daily lives.

How: "By being everything to everyone."

Division offers an energy and green building hotline, provides energy audits and hosts educational seminars and tours, including the annual Tour of Solar and Green Built Homes. If you want a greener garden, Water Division educational seminars on irrigation systems and xeric gardens, provides irrigation system inspections and sells professionally designed, low cost xeric gardens to the public. If you just want to save some money on your next building project, the CRC's ReSource Deconstruction Program salvages used building materials and resell them to low and middle income people.

The Niche: CRC works with individual homeowners, meeting them where they are in their search for a greener lifestyle.

Ways to get involved:

Go Visiting – The CRC could always use help with projects ranging from website development to denailing lumber. For more info on volunteering, email: crc@conservationcenter.org



Who: Conservation Fund

I spoke with Sydney Macy, the Senior Vice President, Western Region of the Conservation Fund. After graduating with a self designed major in conservation, Sydney got into the field right out of college, working for the Nature Conservancy before becoming part of the Conservation Fund team.

Mission: Protecting the United State's big landscapes legacy.

How: The Conservation Fund's Colorado chapter uses its lean organization of experienced staff to respond to their conservation partner's need for quick contracts and project planning. The Conservation in Colorado has worked with state and federal agencies as well as local land trusts to arrange conservation plans that fit their specific needs.

The Niche: The pared-down staff of conservation veterans has the expertise and experience to move fast when necessary, sometimes finishing a contract over night. In addition to their staff, the Conservation Funds revolving fund for conservation loans allows land to be bought and preserved immediately.

What's satisfying about your work?

"Travelling around the west and Colorado and seeing the places I has protected. You know it will be forever."

What's challenging about doing your work?

"... you have to be really persistent and grab the opportunities that present themselves... if people really want to do [land conservation] they can. Work for a small firm. Land conservation field is good to do internships."

Ways to get involved:

Be an Intern – Check out the [website](#) for opportunities.



Who: Partners for a Clean Environment

I spoke with **Bill Hayes** Pollution Prevention Specialist for the Environmental Health Division at Boulder County Public Health. Bill leads the PACE certification program for landscape professionals and retailers, and researches and develops technical resources for the PACE program and the Keep it Clean Partnership program.

Mission: A partnership of local governments and businesses to encourage and recognize environmental achievements.

How: PACE works with smaller, generally unregulated businesses, which collectively have a significant impact on public and environmental health. PACE takes a hands-on approach to pollution prevention through supplying information, training and technical support to small businesses of every sector, from car repair to dentistry.

The Niche: Specialize in working with small businesses, using focus groups to inform each pollution prevention plan. In addition, PACE's technically-inclined staff have the expertise to work in a variety of highly specialized fields, greening bakery ovens for one project and industrial laundry machines in the next. Possibly, the most unique aspect of PACE is that all of their services are FREE.

What's satisfying about your work?

"Helping people that want to do something that they don't know how to do and listening to what peoples goals are, not an environmentalist... I want to help everyone be as comfortable."

What's challenging about your work?

"Getting people to listen to you. Even businesses that want to listen they are so busy. In the coming year, [we plan to spend] more time with fewer businesses and act more as project managers."

Ways to get involved:

Get Educated – Attend one of **PACE's workshops** and/or training sessions.

Drug Drop – October 25 at the Boulder Community Hospital, PACE will be collecting expired pharmaceutical from 8-2pm.

Betsy is a fearless job-market explorer, plumbing the depth and sailing the heights of Boulder and Denver's environmental networks. When she is not (gently) souring the earth for employment, Betsy is sleeping or eating.

Technorati Tags: [american solar energy society](#), [bill hayes](#), [center for resource conservation](#), [conservation fund](#), [cultural survival](#), [environment](#), [global response](#), [green](#), [green jobs](#), [neal lurie](#), [partners for a clean environment](#), [paula palmer](#), [spenser villwock](#), [sydney macy](#)

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