



Proactive environmental activism to promote the remediation of mined land and acid mine drainage: a success story from the South African goldfields

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The Authoritarian Conservation Paradigm

Non Governmental Organisational (NGO) environmental activity within the South African goldfields took the form of backing NATURE CONSERVATION

Elevated the protection of charismatic animal and plant species or landscapes, while hiding the impacts of mining upon local communities

Blaming the poor majority of people for overpopulation and inappropriate resource use

Oldest environmental NGOs were organisations comprising concerned middle class whites

Corporate Environmental Responsibility
The Authoritarian Conservation Paradigm

The focus on feel-good community and biodiversity enhancement projects often represents attempts to create positive corporate images by NGOs for their gold mining industry sponsors while diverting the public away from the fundamental question of how to ensure that there is at least corporate environmental compliance with existing national norms and standards e.g. pollution and waste management

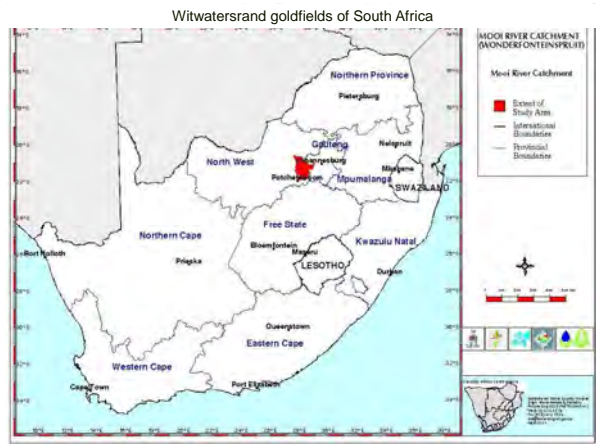
In this context, corporate environmental responsibility remained in the realm of:

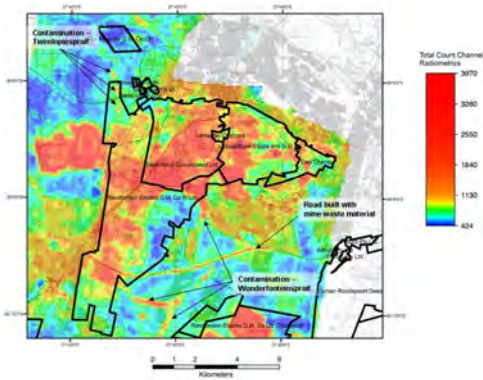
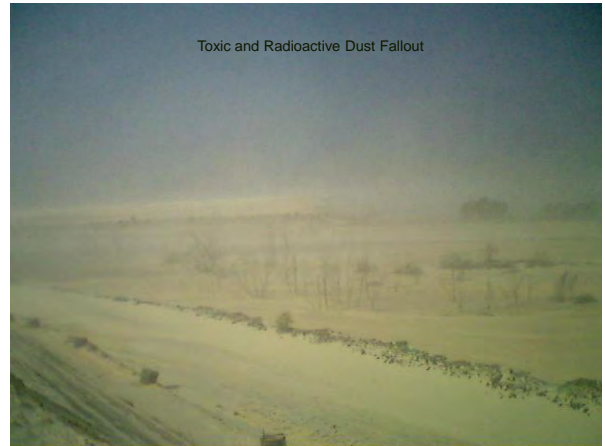
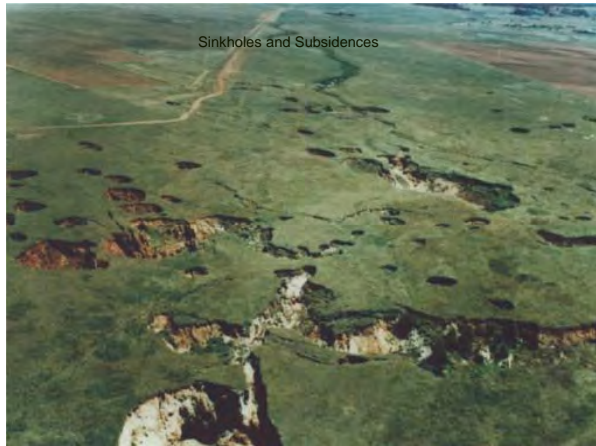
- public relations
- greenwash
- business as usual
- narrow self interest
- an inability to redress the unjust environmental legacy of the apartheid past

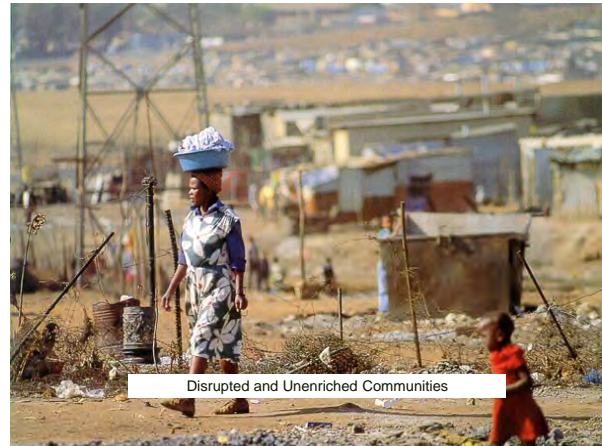
THE AUTHORITARIAN CONSERVATION PARADIGM V
OPPOSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTALISM

A need was identified by the Federation for a Sustainable Environment, a proactive oppositional environmental NGO, to build on the small renaissance in civil society's capacity to act as watchdogs and whistleblowers and to revitalise the multi-stakeholder participatory policy that was a feature of democratisation during the immediate post-apartheid years.

Within this sort of policy and institutional context, environmentalism became a part of an agenda for transformation and poverty reduction, rather than a palliative for a pattern of development that continues to be characterised by high levels of social exclusion, inequality and environmental degradation.







CSIR Official Reports

Contamination of wetlands by Witwatersrand gold mines – processes and the economic potential of gold in wetlands
Henk Coetzee, Jaco Venter & Gabriel Ntsume
Council for Geoscience Report No. 2005-0106

Parliamentary Briefing Document
Report No. CSIR/NRE/WR/R/2008/0079/C

Three Strategic Water Quality Challenges that Parliamentarians Need to Know About

water affairs
Department: Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL STRATEGY (DEVELOPED BY) the dmr
Department of Mineral Resources
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

water quality assessment: Western basin void

Closure Strategy For The Far West Rand Goldfield

"An Integrated Strategic Water Management Plan for the Gauteng Gold Mines"

Department of Environment and Tourism

Radiological Risks to the Public Within the Wonderfontein-spruit Catchment

Final Report, Interdepartmental Committee on Dolomitic Mine Water: Far West Rand. DWAF.

Emerging Issues Paper: Mine Water Pollution 2008

Parliamentary Portfolio Committee

In Loco Inspections

Protest Marches

International Tours

News Media

Conferences

Petitions

Federation of NGOs

Research

ACID MINE DRAINAGE

WATER WOE

100 Years of uranium pollution

Mynmonopolie se gru-moeras

Acid Crisis Keeps Flowing

Don't Drink the Water

Top lawyer joins forces with greens

MINING REHABILITATION

DIRTY MINERS WILL PAY

Water Pollution A Band Aid Won't Do

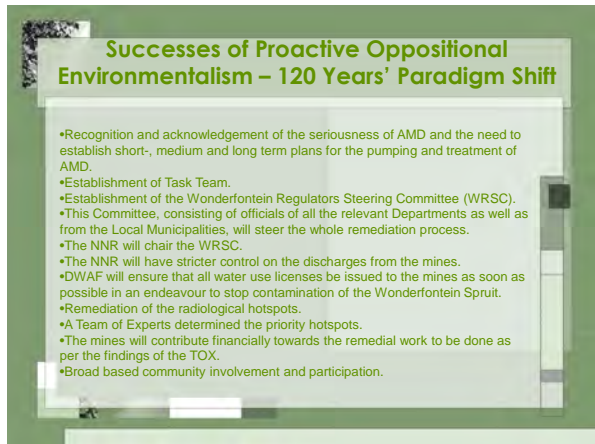
Radioactive Water is Polluting Rivers

WHO'S TO BLAME

City Faces Acid Deluge

Acid Mine Water Slowly Poisons Reserve

South Africa sitting on mine water time bomb



Successes of Proactive Oppositional Environmentalism – 120 Years' Paradigm Shift

- Recognition and acknowledgement of the seriousness of AMD and the need to establish short-, medium and long term plans for the pumping and treatment of AMD.
- Establishment of Task Team.
- Establishment of the Wonderfontein Regulators Steering Committee (WRSC).
- This Committee, consisting of officials of all the relevant Departments as well as from the Local Municipalities, will steer the whole remediation process.
- The NNR will chair the WRSC.
- The NNR will have stricter control on the discharges from the mines.
- DWAF will ensure that all water use licenses be issued to the mines as soon as possible in an endeavour to stop contamination of the Wonderfontein Spruit.
- Remediation of the radiological hotspots.
- A Team of Experts determined the priority hotspots.
- The mines will contribute financially towards the remedial work to be done as per the findings of the TOX.
- Broad based community involvement and participation.