

**A History of Two Worldviews and Design Considerations for
Rural Residential Development in Central New England.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of three parts. The first is a history and analysis of two very different ways of perceiving and interacting with the ecosystems of New England. The native American Indians are contrasted to the European settlers. The Indians ecological sensibilities and cosmology are emphasized as is the European's view of nature which is portrayed as being influenced by a mix of their Judeo-Christian heritage and an emerging scientific worldview. The author maintains that the way the Europeans perceive of their place in creation leads to environmental degradation in New England and he sees this as the root of all environmental problems today. The writings of Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman are then discussed because of their fundamentally ecological orientation.

Part Two is a very brief discussion of the re-emergence of this ecological worldview in the twentieth century and the attempt to articulate a new relationship between our society and the environment as evident in the writings of Aldo Leopold, Bill Devall and George Sessions, and Murray Bookchin.

Part Three is a design synthesis for sustainable development of rural residential homes in central New England. The emphasis here is on the feasibility of 100%-solar design and the many advantages of a functional, perennial polyculture. Certain aspects of Permaculture design are also discussed. This section is written from the point of view of a developer catering to a market of people with "ecological" values. Essentially, the author seeks, through clever design, to develop homes where the number of opportunities for mutualistic interactions between human inhabitants and the environment are maximized.