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Becoming Environmental: How environmental educators fashion environmental citizens

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In this paper I problematize understandings of environmental citizenship in environmental education. Through examining common programs and practices, I argue that environmental education can be understood not as a means to “re-connect” our true selves with the natural world but rather as a governmental mechanism for fashioning new beings into existence – beings who are so “environmental” that they have very specific concerns, interests and capacities that allow them to *become* informed and active environmental citizens. Reading environmental education practices as technologies of citizenship deployed to fashion new personas challenges contemporary understandings of the role of such practices, and challenges notions of environmental citizenship as a form of liberation. While such a reading could easily be understood as a critique of the work of environmental educators, the more meaningful question this paper asks is whether such efforts to constitute and regulate individuals is indeed problematic, if we believe bodies such as the IPCC and the world’s top scientists who argue that climate change is real, human induced, and will have major negative impacts on all life on Earth.