EARTH FIRST!



Yule, December 21, 1980
Volumn 1 Number 2

As for small difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by an unseen and unaccountable old joker...There is nothing like the perils of the wilderness to breed this free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy.

Herman Melville

ARE WE SERIOUS?

The response to the first EARTH FIRST! Newsletter has been most encouraging. Thank you very much for all of your encouraging words and support! We look forward to getting to know all of you personally in the next few months.

Perhaps we <u>are</u> in the right place at the right time. Several people, however, have asked, "Are you serious?", not out of concern that we're a bunch of off-the-wall nuts, but fearing that EARTH FIRST! will never get beyond words to action. This certainly a legitimate fear, and there is but one answer for it - It depends entirely upon you.

Howie Wolke, Susan Morgan, Dave Foreman, and a couple of other people cannot make EARTH FIRST! an effective radical force for wilderness preservation. But you can. You can radicalize the conservation movement. You can provide an effective conter-force to the Sagebrush Rebels who will be running the Interior Department. You can stop the juggernaut of egregious 'progress" by throwing yourself onto the tracks like Australian army ants. You can save some of the precious magic of the planet. The few who started EARTH FIRST! can help, but if they are left alone, it won't take the system long to chew them up and spit them out.

Is EARTH FIRST! serious? It's up to you!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You've joined EARTH FIRST! (maybe even sent in some money). Now what? What can you do to be active in the outfit, to help the gang? The following are some suggestions.

1. Adopt a preserve. Pick one of the proposed EF! preserves and develop a firm boundary and written proposal for it. Organize people in support of it. Begin to agitate for it.
2. Develop issue positions. Pick an environmental issue (ORV's, toxic substances, clean air, Antarctica, mining, etc.) and develop EARTH FIRST!'s position on it. Write a fact sheet defending that position. Be EF's coordinator for it.
3. Comment on environmental statements or agency wilderness proposals from a radical perspective. Recommend wilderness boundaries far larger than those of the Sierra Club or Wilderness Society. Develop and support radical alternatives for Forest Service Land Use Plans. Get others to testify or write in support of the position you develop.
4. Organize a local radical conservation group. It can be independent or affiliated with EARTH FIRST! Groups already organized include EARTH FIRST! MONTANA, OZARK GREEN WORLD AVENGERS, APPALACHIAN SURVIVAL (Virginia), and ALASKA SURVIVAL. The EF! Newsletter will report on the activities of these groups.
5. Radicalize moderate conversation groups. If you're involved in a moderate conservation group, stay involved, but try to get them to take stronger positions and propose larger wilderness areas.
6. Participate in EF! demonstrations and gatherings. (See related articles.)
7. Organize colleges. Signs point to growing activism in colleges and universities during the '80's. Organize radical conservation groups on campus.
8. Coordinate national EARTH FIRST! projects. We need good people who will be in charge of our national projects (Sagebrush Rebellion, Glen Canyon Dam, Creation Myths, ORV's, EF! Calendar, Publicity Coordination, etc.)
9. Recruit more EF! members or help raise funds for EARTH FIRST! (Also distribute copies of the EF! Newsletter.)
10. Publicize EARTH FIRST!. Write articles or give talks on the growing radical environmental movement. Letters to the editor, too. We've been quiet for too long. Let's make the world aware that the Sierra Club and other groups are moderates -- that there is a truly radical wing of conservation.
11. Create the poetry of the movement. We need myth, ritual, and song.

These are just a few suggestions on how you can help make EARTH FIRST! effective, serious, and active. From what we know of our growing and enthusiastic membership, you will think up a lot of other ideas. Contact Dave Foreman or another member of the Circle for more information.

GATHERINGS

Due to a variety of problems, we were unable to organize an EARTH FIRST! Winter Gathering. But we are definitely organizing two other gatherings during 1981. They are important, both from the standpoint of EF! members meeting one another and also letting the world know we exist. If you are willing to help organize either of these get-togethers or act as a car pool coordinator for your area, contact Dave Foreman.

Glen Canyon Dam -- March 21

The Spring Solstice is a time of rebirth, of celebration, of joy, of Earth worship. Glen Canyon Dam drowned the most magical place on the continent and is the symbol EARTH FIRST! has chosen to represent man's assault on the Earth. So, what could be more appropriate than a national EARTH FIRST! gathering at Glen Canyon Dam for the Spring Solstice on March 21, 1981? Not only is March 21 the Solstice, but it is the Full Moon and a weekend! Come and join EARTH FIRST! for poetry, music, ritual, and celebrating. Before and after the Spring Solstice celebration there will be the opportunity for wilderness adventure (cross country skiing in the shadow of the sacred San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, hiking in the Grand Canyon, Escalante, Paria, etc.). This also will be an opportunity to discuss the future of EARTH FIRST! More details will be forthcoming in the February 1, issue of the Newsletter. We need your help to organize this gathering.

Round River Rendezvous - Fourth of July

This year's Round River Rendezvous will be held on the Fourth of July weekend near Moab, Utah. By happy coincidence, the Grand County Commission plans (again!) to send a county bulldozer into a BLM Wilderness Study Area near Moab on the Fourth. The RRR is not just an EARTH FIRST! event but all conservation groups are invited to take part. The RRR is an opportunity for conservationists from around the West to gather in a quasi-wilderness setting to discuss western conservation issues and have a good time. We would like to turn out several hundred people for this important rendezvous. More details will be included in later Newsletters, but mark the Fourth on your calendar now and begin telling others about it. Help is also needed to organize this session. Come enjoy the fireworks!

"Rationality is a curse since it can cause humans to forget the natural order of things. A wolf never forgets his or her place in the natural order. Europeans do."

Russell Means

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Two articles recently appeared in national magazines that may be of interest to EARTH FIRST! members. The December issue of MOTHER JONES printed the text of a speech given by Russell Means this summer at the Black Hills Survival Gathering in South Dakota. It is entitled, "For the World to Live, 'Europe' Must Die." Means makes it clear that "European" does not refer to race but to mind set, in this case referring to the Earth-dominating, technological, progress-worshipping philosophy of western civilization (including Christianity, Marxism, Capitalism, and Scientism).

The second article, in the October issue of NEW AGE is "Eco-Violence -- Should We Fight to Save the Earth?" by Robert Hunter. The article considers whether violence, generally based on the anti-whaling crusade, is a moral approach for preservationists.

Both articles are well worth reading. If you can't locate a copy, send EF! $.75 for Means' or $.50 for Hunter's, and we'll send you a photocopy. You will enjoy reading these articles which are important bricks in the construction of a philosophical foundation for radical conservation.

MYTH AND RITUAL

A number of EARTH FIRST! members are neo-pagans and are interested in developing the myth and ritual of a new Earth worshiping wilderness region. They are talking about ways to celebrate full moons, solstices, and equinoxes. They also are working on a moon cycle calendar with new names for days of the week and months.

Make no mistake, this is not rehashed Eastern mysticism or urban kabalism, it is wilderness magic. Contact Bill Coleman, P.O. Box 551, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203; (501) 664-7127 (R).

SURVIVING THE BIG ONE

Situation in Poland got you nervous? Do you have little faith in the ability of Ronnie and Leonid to keep the nukes from being lobbed back and forth across the North Pole? Well, you ain't alone among EARTH FIRST! members. All retreaters and survivalists are not right-wing religious fanatics. Several EARTH FIRST! members have formed a retreat group and plan to survive World War III. If you are seriously interested, you can write a letter to RETREAT c/o Dave Foreman, 1802 Sun Court, Rio Rancho, NM 87124.

"Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil.

But is it not the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil?...I say, break the law."

Thoreau
Civil Disobedience

EDITORIAL -- TIMID ENVIRONMENTALISM

During the last several years, it seems that conservationists have become timid -- almost apologetic. When we defend a wilderness proposal, we explain that there are no real conflicts with minerals, timber, or grazing. If problems do develop, we eagerly cut out the offending portion of the area in order to alleviate timber or mineral objections. We come hesitant, embarrassed at having to stack up wilderness values against those of greenback America. I accept my personal share of this responsibility for the seven or eight years I worked for The Wilderness Society. During that time I often advocated a rabbit-like position of keeping our profile low and believed that moderation was the best way to influence the powers that be and get wilderness protected.

Well, not any more.

Is the Moral Majority timid? The NRA apologetic? The Sagebrushers hesitant? In an earlier age, did the civil rights and anti-war activists keep their profiles low?

Not really. And why should we?

If you believe in wilderness, if you love the Earth, if you are appalled at what humankind is doing to the biosphere, then don't be timid. Speak out. Act with vigor and pride in your convictions!

It's time for us to fight!

Dave Foreman

THE NEW SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR (YUK)

For those of you who feared the worst for the environment under a Reagan presidency, remember: You aren't paranoid if they really are out to get you!

BUILDING ALLIANCES

If I had a hammer
& not the one that busted

in my hands as organizers are
busted for planting

trade union pegs
to stretch the corporate tent

a hammer that wouldn't
buckle under

to repeated blows merciless
sun baking the poor

tools pushed to their limits
snapping under pressure

if I had a hammer
forged of the Mother's fury

& tempered with love
for all her relations

two-legged four-legged
buried stone or spiraling seed

a hammer shaped to
the will of the people

nother could stop us
from driving a nail through

the heart of the beast
to begin the reconstruction

building alliances
powerful as the wind

that rips a roof to shreds
or sweeps a prairie clean

artful goodtimes
union of street poets
summer 1980

Ronald Reagan's choice for Secretary of the Interior could not have been worse. It is James Watt of Denver, head of the anti-environmental Mountain States Legal Foundation, an outfit that has filed suits and appeals and intervened on behalf of overgrazers, Sagebrush rebels, miners and oil men against the already weak environmental regulations of BLM and other federal agencies.

Since the phrase, "Putting the fox in charge of the chicken house," is overused, we'll say that making James Watt Secretary of the Interior is like making David Berkowitz (Son of Sam) chief of homicide for the New York Police Department.

The election of Reagan as President has put the Sagebrushers firmly in control of the Interior Department. The advantage of this is that we now have thoroughgoing evil to fight instead of inept bureaucracy...

Get ready for the environmental Battle of the Bulge in the Rocky Mountain West!

NEW PRESERVES

Several new preserves have been suggested to EF!, and we are happy to adopt the following as additions to our Platform.

Adirondack Preserve - The entire six million acres within the blue line restored to a wilderness condition.

California Coast Preserve - Six million acres (or so) from Santa Cruz to Point Concepcion, including Big Sur and Diablo Canyon. *Dredge out the filled in portions of San Francisco Bay to pre-European days.

You also may want to look at an article in the January, 1981, PLAYBOY: "The Astonishing Wrongs of the New Moral Right," by Johnny Greene. The enemy is more dangerous than we may have thought.

T-SHIRTS AND BUMPER STICKERS

We are thinking of offering various t-shirts and bumper stickers to our members and the general public. Suggested bumper stickers include: EARTH FIRST!, MONKEY WRENCH GANG, IMMORAL MINORITY, WILDERNESS, DAMMIT!, HONK IF YOU'RE A MISANTHROPE, HAYDUKE LIVES, HOWL IF YOU LOVE WOTAN. T-shirts include: EARTH FIRST! with the green fist logo, and MONKEY WRENCH GANG with the monkey wrench.

Let us know what you think and if you think we could get rid of enough to be worth the trouble. Bumper stickers and t-shirts are, of course, a good way to publicize EARTH FIRST! (and to get your nose broken in a bar in Hanksville, Utah -- Are there bars in Hanksville?)

BOOK REVIEW

HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF PROGRESS, by Robert Nisbet (Basic Books). A weighty tome by the Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities Emeritus at Columbia University, this deals with the philosophical history of the enemy -- the philosophy of the cancer cell. This is a scholarly and complete review of the development of the ideas of progress and, if you're of a philosophical bent or just like to impress your friends, it's an excellent way to find out what we're up against -- from Protagoras through St. Augustine, Comte, Marx, to that guy with the blow-dry hair and three-piece suit advising the president of the corporation that's gonna screw up your paradise for the greatest good for the greatest number, ad naseum.

Although the author is clearly in sympathy with the idea of progress, one of the last chapters in the book deals with thoughtful objections to the obsession in modern times. If nothing else, go down to your library and pluck the book off the shelf, and read the chapter 'progress at Bay." It will give you some good ideas for future reading to be able to say with greaer intellectual authority, "Hey wait a goddamn minute!"

(How's this for an EF! slogan: Not blind opposition to progress, but wide-eyed opposition to progress!)

EF! ISSUE COORDINATORS

Earlier in this issue in the article, "What You Can Do," we mentioned that we need coordinators for various issues. EF! Issue Coordinators are responsible for catalyzing and brainstorming on a particular issue, drafting proposed legislation, writing fact sheets, organizing an EF! committee, and generally taking charge of the issue.

Coordinators are needed on the following:

1. ORV's (outlaw them)
2. Sagebrush Rebellion (return state lands to the federal government)
3. Creation myths
4. Dam Dismantling
5. Round River Rendezvous
6. Public Relations

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN RISES FROM THE DEAD

Remember the Scopes Trail in Tennessee back in the twenties? Well, the bible-thumping hillbillies are at it again.

In California, New York, Texas, and other states, believers in the genesis theory of creation are storming the public schools crying to have their myth taught as a viable theory of creation along with evolution in biology classes. (Our new President, darling of the intellectual set, has endorsed this by the way.)

Now, EARTH FIRST! has nothing against this. Some of us have always felt that scientism's view of the development of life was a mite clinical (sort of like comparing sexual research in a stainless steel laboratory with that performed in a warm breeze, under a full moon, along a wilderness river somewhere). So we are wading into this issue.

We find the myth of an obscure mid-eastern tribe as contained in genesis to be thoroughly unimaginative, dull, and lacking in literary merit. We propose that a variety of creation theories be taught in high school biology classes (such as the world being carried around on the back of a giant turtle, or Odin forming the Earth out of the flesh of Ymir).

We would like to compile a fact sheet on this issue and jump into the discussion. This is not just a gonzo project, but a means of demonstrating in our schools the rich variety of human thought and respect for the Earth.

For those of you who are interested, you may also wish to read SPIRITS OF THE SACRED MOUNTAINS, by William Coffer, CREATION MYTHS, by Marie-Louise Von Franz, MYTHS OF CREATION by Philip Freund, and THE SPIRAL DANCE, by Starhawk.

A Coordinator for this issue is needed. If you are interested, please let us know. Followers of Jerry Falwell need not apply.

ABOUT EARTH FIRST! AND THE NEWSLETTER

Kicking andscreaming, EF! is slowly being organized. We now have a bank account. Membership dues and contributions should be made out to EARTH FIRST! and sent to Susan Morgan, P.O. Box 536, Breckenridge, CO 80424.

Susan is also in charge of the membership list and newsletter. So, if you have suggestions of people to receive the newsletter, send their names and addresses to Susan. Dave Foreman is co-editing the newsletter with Susan and is generally coordinating issue matters. Contact Dave at 1802 Sun Court, Rio Rancho, NM 87124, (505) 898-5468.

MORE ABOUT EARTH FIRST!

In addition to Dave and Susan, members of the Circle, the governing body of EF!, are Howie Wolke - Jackson, Wyoming; Randall Gloege - Billings, Montana; Bart Koehler - Laramie, Wyoming; Cosmos Blank - Eugene, Oregon; and Mike Roselle - Jackson, Wyoming. The Circle is assisted by a number of advisors.

The EF! Newsletter is sent to members eight times a year (solstices, equinoxes, and sabbats). Membership in EARTH FIRST! is ten bucks (unless you're broke). Any contributions are appreciated!

EARTH FIRST! has no officers, no heirarchy other than the Circle and advisors, no tax-exemption, no bulk mailing privileges, no constitution, no by-laws. We're here to do something (and get drunk now and then), not play organizational games. Copies of the first issue of the newsletter which contains our Platform are available from Dave or Susan.

Contributions to the newsletter -- articles, reports, art, book reviews, letters, poetry, quotes, etc. -- are welcome and encouraged. Please let us know if you wish to remain anonymous or if you wish your name to be used.

Membership in EARTH FIRST! is open to anyone in general agreement with our Platform. Membership is kept entirely confidential, and all mailings are sent in a plain brown (or white) wrapper!

AND MORE...

All hail the new organization. May it flourish and the earth with it. -- Santa Fe

You guys are a breath of fresh air. -- Nevada City, CA

Good luck with EF! Boy, are we gonna have fun with Reagan! -- Radium Springs, NM

I've been leaning in the direction of Earth First! ever since I've seen how the grazing EIS process is <u>not</u> working. Shit-kicking bastards. -- Tucson

Deal me in. I'm not adverse to being the bag carrier in the shit war ahead. -- New Mexico

...with a facist like Ronald Ray Guns after us, there can be NO moderate stances any longer -- Flagstaff

I appreciate your guts, so here is some $$. No joking -- watch out for the FBI as they will <u>surely</u> be watching you. -- Missoula

Thank God you are here! I'm ready to reclaim the Earth. We need a leading edge. -- Walla Walla

Great!!! Yes, evolution of the environmental movement! Next decade should be great fun! -- California

Russ Train once said, "Thank God for Dave Brower -- he makes it so easy for the rest of us to appear reasonable." Youze guys are about to make Dave Brower look reasonable, and more power you! -- Tom Turner, Editor, Not Man Apart

Does the spirit of Rudolf the Red live? -- Ohio

As you must be aware after constant criticism, your program is far too conservative. Why no endangered species program? Re-intro of griz, elk, wolf, and mosquito. Stegosaurus in Vernal, Sabertooth cat in Escalante, intelligent life in Blanding? -- Utah

Great organization! Which damn dam are we going to dismantle first? -- New Mexico

No waiver, but I'll work my ass off. We're used to waging wars here in the armpit of Redneck country. Nothing like a good battle to lift the spirits. -- Montrose, CO

Having just testified before Santini as one humanoid amidst a sea of diamond studded Sagebrush Rebels, I need EF! This is Hatch Country. -- Salt Lake City

Keep the newsletter coming! More poetry. -- Seattle





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