

Letters to Earth First!

Dear EF!

It's definitely time for action. No more compromising with the forces of evil. Here, here. But, beware of the power they wield and be careful to not become legally vulnerable as a reader forewarned in your last issue. Do not advocate sabotage, just do it. An effective monkey wrencher is one who doesn't talk about it. There's not much one can do behind bars. As far as 'spiking' goes, it sounds like fun but its effectiveness is debatable. Stop them before they get to the tree. Once they get there (via new road) it's no longer wilderness anyway. If they can't cut a certain area, they'll just go somewhere else. Besides, I see potential for innocent people getting hurt as a result... like a broken chain slashing into somebody's head. Do you want to take responsibility for maiming people? Destroy machines, not flesh.

Also, please sign me up for the fundraiser hike into the Maze. After you've done that, destroy this letter so to help me maintain a low profile with the FBI who will probably be dropping in tonight to microfilm your files. Keep up the good work.

Yours Truly

Dear Earth First!

It seems bright ideas occur to many people simultaneously. I was amused to read Leroy Watson's comments on Spikin' trees in the Dec. 21 issue. I had the same idea quite a while back. I haven't actually done any spikin', since I consider it only a last resort tactic and we are not quite to our last resort in Vermont. But I suggest that anybody who wants to do the job right use concrete nails, made for nailing onto concrete walls. They're expensive but they're tough and hard enough to trouble even carbide blades in a mill.

Yours truly
R.A. Vermont

Dear Earth First!

I went up to Salt Lake City to see what the Utah Wilderness Association was all about, and blundered unawares into the EARTH FIRST! Roadshow.

Well, here is an authentic crew of folks with a sense of humor and nary a 3-piece suit. Maybe EARTH FIRST! can teach Ronnie Reagan what happens when he's up against us real environmental extremists.

Enclosed find \$10 for the newsletter and \$5 more as a contribution. (Also please send me 3 more copies of the March issue, to my present address.)

R.W.—New York

Dear Friends,

I can't take it any longer. Sign me up as a member. We've got to do something about those bonzos in Washington now!

D.N.—Montana

Dear Earth First!

I thing you're deranged, irresponsible, and completely out of touch with the political and social realities of the day. Please sign me up for a year's membership.

TW.—Arizona

"Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine."

—Thoreau, from *Civil Disobedience*

Dear Dave & "Johnny Sagebrush".

What's this PAGAN stuff? Why tempt the Lord? Pray instead, for divine assistance via St. Francis of Assisi—the 1st ecologist! Need I remind you—we prayed to have MX thwarted, and it happened! I know some are disillusioned by the Jerry Falwells. I say to them, "Read 2 Peter (especially verse 3:8) as well as Luke 8:10; Luke 12:24-28. It says it all about evolution and nature!

Charlie

Reply to Charlie Watson's letter:

As someone who nearly became a preacher in the Church of Christ, I think I appreciate Charlie's concern. I turned away from Christianity for many reasons, including what I saw to be its philosophy of man and nature. I am happy that Christians like Charlie Watson can find an environmental ethic in their religion and I urge them to work as hard as they can in sowing the seeds of that truth and in building a greater sense of the cycles of nature in the practice of their faith. At the same time, I hold my personal religious views towards Mother Earth just as strongly and sincerely as any Christian holds hers or his. As I keep saying, diversity is a strength in ecological systems and in human causes. I hope EARTH FIRST! is big enough for all of us—Christian, Buddhist, Jew, Atheist, Neo-pagan, or an out-and-out-houling-at-the-moon pantheist, like me).

—Dave Foreman

(Gee, I'm catching slack this issue. Maybe I'm finally succeeding in my life-long goal of becoming controversial!)

Dear Earth First!

... Let me know my subscription status. If we kick ass soon enough and save the country, we won't need the Earth First! rag!

T.L., Oregon

Earth First!

The newspaper's OK, but just barely. You need more good stuff. Like real people walking around on the ground. Good luck.

B.W., California

Dear Earth First!

Who's in charge there? Anyway, if you list any more threatened wilderness lands in Oregon please get the list straight. We live here and know what areas are threatened.

—North Fork John Day Wilderness Complex (Umatilla Wallowa Whitman)

We just won a 100,000 acre timber sale appeal!

—Joseph Canyon for Nez Perce Chief Joseph (Wallowa Whitman)

—Middle Santiam (Willamette)

—Bridge Creek (Ochoco)

—Glacier-Monument (Malheur)

—Kalmiopsis (Siskiyou)

—Wapiti (Umatilla)

—Old Cascades (Willamette)

These and others are threatened now.

Tim Lillebo

Dear EARTH FIRST!

Gandhi and King did not practice passive resistance, as Dave Foreman says—they practiced satyagraha, and if Dave thinks so he hasn't been keeping up with what has been happening in the Movement for a New Society and the various Alliances.

Satyagraha is holding to the truth. The truth is that there is no way to peace in our wilderness

sanctuaries except peace itself.

Dave, when you call yourself an animal in Levis and boots, how do you distinguish yourself from James Watt and Ronald Reagan? It is the adversarial attitude, us against them, that exploits our wilderness, and when you advocate guns and dynamite you are just playing their game.

Come off it, Dave! Violence is for chumps who are looking for the easy way. Boom! and everything is settled, or so you may suppose. Actually—boom! and everything gets worse. Ask Rap Brown.

Find your own Salt March, Dave. Then by a simple moral act, like Gandhi making salt under the truncheons of the British Raj, you will find yourself in your Levis changing opinions in the world.

Aloha,
Robert Aitken

Foreman Replies:

I'm surprised that this is the only slack I received on my "violence" editorial. Admittedly, Bob, I haven't read very widely or deeply on pacifism, non-violence, or satyagraha. And while I respect your viewpoint and that of Gandhi and King (what I really respect about them is their will and courage), I cannot find, any transcendental truth in your approach. A good tactic, an effective tactic, yes. A tactic that I hope EARTH FIRST! will use in its many coming confrontations with the industrial beast. I have studied history, biology, and anthropology. I have sat out alone with the moon seeking visions. And I have not received any enlightenment that I should never fight back. Any creature, no matter how seemingly meek, will fight back when threatened. I think any human being uncorrupted by civilization will do the same. To my way of thinking, Eastern ideas of stepping out of the violent cycle are presumptuous and anthropocentric (by setting human beings apart from the semi-violent natural world). Of course, I may be wrong (maybe I haven't had any previous lives), I may be really no better than James Watt (ugh, what a horrible thought to go to bed with!), but I think that I simply have a realistic view of human nature and the way the world works. I am entirely pragmatic about violence/non-violence. We should use whichever we feel comfortable with and whichever is most appropriate to a particular situation. As I've said many times before, I believe there is room in EARTH FIRST! for ex-Marines like myself and for followers of Gandhi. There are many paths one can take to defend our Earth Mother. Including that of the warrior.

(Ed. Note: We welcome any additional views on this important topic.)

DEADLINE

All material for consideration in the Summer Solstice (June 21) EF! Newsletter should be sent no later than June 1st. Include SASE for material to be returned.