

## We Are Not Debating Society

### Dave Foreman

I would like to go over some of the things that I think define us. These are in no particular order, except the first one, and the last one, which are probably two very important ones.

The first one is simply „Earth First!“ That we believe, in every decision and every act and every thought, that consideration for the Earth must come first. As Aldo Leopold said, „A thing is right when it tends to promote the integrity, stability, and beauty of biotic systems. A thing is wrong when it tends otherwise.“ You can take all your systems of ethics, all your golden rules, all your rights and wrongs, and that’s the one that counts. That’s the one that means something. Earth First! Not „people First,“ not „General Motors First,“ not „The United States Government First,“ not „Power To The People,“ first, but Earht First!

Another parameter is that we aren’t interested in credibility or legitimacy with the gang of thugs running this planet.

We don’t care if Senator James McClure or Secretary of the Interior Donald Hoden don’t want to let us in their office. Because they don’t have credibility with us. They are just a bunch of back street alley thugs that have power, and who are running things, and who have no moral or ethical right to have any control over us. So why should we care if we have legitimacy? If we have credibility? If some congressman or forest supervisor will condescend to speak to us? They don’t have credibility with us. So let’s not get sucked into it. We are right. If they want to be right, then they can come to us, and try to get credibility and legitimacy with us.

Another one is that we are offering a fundamental challenge and critique of industrialism, „progress,“ and technology. Are we Luddites? You’re damn right we’re Luddites! Do we love the sight of a burning bulldozer? We LOVE the sight of burning bulldozer! We have not had any progress on this planet in 16,000 years. Real progress, the only good technology, the only good tool developed since the atlatl, is the monkeywrench. And so don’t be ashamed or afraid or embarrassed when somebody calls you a Luddite, or challenges you for criticizing technology. We’re anti-technology. Somebody’s got to be anti-technology.

We also feel that linear logic and rationality aren’t the only way to think. The only thing I can think of that arithmetic’s good for is counting up my life list for birds, or for figuring out how many beers I have left in the cooler. There’s big way to think other than this big left hemisphere up here. It’s the emotional, intuitive, and – in our warped, sexist world – feminine way of thinking: that we’ve got to get back in touch with the mind that’s in the whole Earth. It’s not just the intuitive part here, it’s not just the reptilian cortex here, it’s that canyon out there that’s thinking, that’s a big mind. It’s the sky, it’s the clouds, it’s the trees that are thinking. We can’t go in and just supply rational arguments to everything, facts and figures, economics, laws. Because those things don’t count. What counts is the wisdom that comes from the trees. The passion you feel in your heart. We are emotional, and we’re proud of it. Sometimes we’re irrational and we’re proud of it. Sometimes we’re mystical, sometimes we connect with something bigger than ourselves. And we don’t need our pocket calculators to do that. So when you’re called irrational, don’t worry about it. We’re irrational, and proud.

I think we also recognize that even though we love this bunch of three or four hundred people here, though we love all the little wolves, there are still too damned many of us on the planet. Overpopulation is a problem. Tomorrow, July 11, has been determined to be the day that the five billionth person will be born. Yeah, there are a lot of problems here on Earth, human-caused problems. But one of the big ones is overpopulation, and there are too many of us.

Another parameter is that we aren’t in the political spectrum. We are „subverting the dominant paradigm.“ We’re against all those platonic heresies. Christianity, Marxism, secular

humanism. We aren't left, we aren't right, we aren't in the middle, we aren't even in front or behind. We aren't even playing that game. We have to go beyond the tired old leftist or rightist or other political ideas. We are coming up with something that's new. And it's also 16,000 years old.

Another principle, and one that's hard for us sometimes, is to not put any human group on pedestal. Any ethnic, any class, any political group. It's real chic sometimes to put the rural proletariat on a pedestal. They are the „nice logger“, the „noble fellow“ exploited by the corporation. Or to put our group off on a pedestal. We're all human beings. And it's racist, it's classist, to expect more out of any group or to give any group more breaks. We're all on this planet, we're all causing trouble, we all have to work together.

Another parameter, and very, very fundamental one, and the core of our philosophy, I think, is the idea of biocentrism, or intrinsic value. The idea that all things have inherent worth, are important for themselves. And tied into that is the idea that humans are not the measure of all things. That you do not determine the value for something by the good it can do for human beings. Things exist for themselves, and not for human beings. There's no reason to even discuss that one, because that's the motivation, I think, for all of us, the recognition of intrinsic value.

Another is that wilderness is the real world. The concrete boxes we live in, the freeways, the cities, the rural areas, aren't the real world. Your job back in L.A. or New York City or Bozeman isn't the real world. What is the real world? It's out here, in the arena of evolution. Wilderness is the essence of everything we're after. Natural diversity. We aren't an environmental group. Environmental groups worry about environmental health hazards to human beings. They worry about clean air and clean water for the benefit of people, and ask us why we're so wrapped up in something as irrelevant and tangential as wilderness. Something as elitist as wilderness. Well, I can tell you, a Kaibab squirrel doesn't think wilderness is elitist. Wilderness is the essence of everything. It's the real world. And our goal is the day when there is no word, in any language on earth, for the concept of wilderness, because everything is wilderness, and it just is.