

Earth First! Split Final

Yearly Gathering Set

Fifth Estate Collective

1991

Earth First! is dead! Long live Earth First!

The irreconcilable differences within the dispute-plagued, radical environmental group finally led to what one of its founders, Dave Foreman, who is often at the center of the controversies, has long called for—a “no-fault divorce.” Although there is much behind-the-scenes acrimony among the leading figures on all sides, the public stance has been that each should go in peace and continue defending the environment in their own way.

On one side stand the old guard EF! founders who think that “social activism” has distorted the original focus of the group. On the other are many who were active in the Redwood Summer of last summer, who felt an increasing intolerance from the “redneck,” misanthrope wing of EF! A summary of the disputes was printed in the last issue of the *Fifth Estate* and in the final edition of the *EF! Journal*.

For once Foreman may be right. Better that each faction go its own way. His patriotic, elitist, misanthropic position was doing the group (or the earth) little good.

Foreman and his gang will publish a new journal to be called Wild Earth that will focus, “from a biocentric perspective, strictly on wilderness, wildlife, habitat and biodiversity.” They will leave “humanist” issues to other groups, but does that mean they will ignore events like the Persian Gulf war which is destroying the environment along with people?

Foreman will resume the role he once played on the old Journal as editor and columnist as well as continuing his mail order book service modestly titled, “Dave Foreman’s Wilderness Bookshelf” (POB 5141, Tucson AZ 85703).

Those who have continued to identify with Earth First! have just published the first issue of the new EF! paper, now titled, simply, Earth First! The editorial collective, which replaces the old editor’s position, says the paper will remain what it has always been, “a voice crying for the wilderness, howling, snarling, wild and offensive.”

But, one would hope, without the misanthropic, arrogant, sometimes racist and sexist, right-wing views which were identified with some of the old-line EFers who have gone over to the Wild Earth side. Much of the criticism of the old Journal centered around the tight editorial control exercised by the Foreman crew over content with which he disagreed, so the new EF! newspaper has implemented a different style of editorial organization.

There will be a core of editors in the Wild Rockies and guest editors from around the country for each issue. They hope this will make the paper more reflective of the movement as a whole and allow for greater accessibility to readers and EF! activists. For subscriptions, send \$20 to Earth First!, POB 5176, Missoula MT 59806.

Once the dust has settled, it will hopefully be back to normal in the fight to save the wilderness, stop extinctions and reinhabit species. As usual, Earth First! will hold an annual gathering, its Round River Rendezvous, this year in Vermont’s Green Mountain National Forest. This is the first time the RRR will be held east of the Mississippi so it should have a different character with the old-guard not in attendance and with an Eastern site. The dates are August 5 to 11.

Those interested in going should send a \$20 check, which covers expenses, made out to “1991 Round River Rendezvous” and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to 1991 RRR, POB 653, Greenfield MA 01302. You will receive a map of the area with directions. Those desiring information on how to hike to the site should request that as well.

Correction: Last issue’s article on Earth First! [FE #335, Winter, 1990–91] was incorrectly attributed to Estelle Fennel as author. She took the photographs accompanying the piece, which was written by Kelpie Wilson.

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