

Earth First! Again

Report from the 1992 EF! Gathering

Lone Wolf Circles

1992

Fifth Estate note: The 12th annual Earth First! Round River Rendezvous (RRR) was held in Colorado's San Juan National Forest, June 28-July 5, with a direct action against an Amoco Corp. facility immediately after it.

Lone Wolf Circles, a long-time EF! activist, contributes the following report of the RRR and his impressions of it.

Further articles on the gathering appear in the current *EF! Journal*, available from PO BX 5176, Missoula MT 59806 for \$3. Next year's RRR is scheduled for Arizona's threatened Mt. Graham (see P. 1 of this issue for information on that situation).

"In wilderness is the preservation of the world."

—H.D. Thoreau

"Oh, I get it! If we're going to re-weave the web, we're going to have to unravel first!"

—Jim O'Connor

"Where's the beer? Where's the next action?"

—Jake Jagoff

It's been a while since the shit started flyin'. Remember the Rendezvous of '87, when Sea Shepard Captain Paul Watson threatened to piss on the information table put up by eco-anarchos, "Alien-Nation?"

The anarchists broke camp before daylight, running from what they believed were the KKK tactics of rabid deep ecologists—which were, in fact, some friends and I seeking to disturb EF! founder, Dave Foreman's well-furnished and well-hidden camp. The bullwhip was swung on by joyously misanthropic Bill Turk. Bill recently bit the big one when a mountain he loved decided to shift its load of wet snow, so we dedicate the incident to him.

We've missed the sporting attacks of the FE's George Bradford, blaming the practice of deep ecology for remarks made by an ex-spokesman. But, "Dave's not here, man." No more American flags. No more distracting flag burnings.

We learned from the critiques of ecofeminists and decentralists, and took back the movement. We paid a great cost in subscribers, donations, and the perceptions of the average readers outside the Earth First! tribe. The national media bought the lie put forth by a few prominent EF! conservatives that we were taken over by "hippies, gays, leftists and feminists." As has been said, it was always women and freaks and the politically disenfranchised that took the risks for which EF! is famous. And, they continue their work unabated, in spite of harassment, arrests, the bombing of Judi and Darryl, and the continuing FBI attempts to destroy them.

Yippie-Pagan-Anarchist

Remember the beautiful first issue of *Live Wild or Die!*, brought out as an uncensored alternative to Foreman's informative but autocratic EF! Journal? The voice of the diverse Earth First! movement is now put out in Missoula,

Montana by a rotating collective, with the help of EF! cofounder and Yippie-Pagan-Anarchist Mike Roselle. Censorship is out. Humor is in. Yes, Emma, ours is a revolution you can dance in.

The tribe's alive! Two hundred and fifty neo-pagan warriors gathered over the Fourth of July to plan the defense of Wilderness, and to celebrate their own innate wildness. Following a long walk into Colorado's Piedras River Canyon, the ambitious feral pantheist (or government agent) discovered a tribe with rituals, priorities and a sacred world-view little different from the Inuit and Penan championed by this rag.

All day long, workshops were held on civil disobedience, non-monogamy, tree climbing, media and the Council of All Beings. Forget that mine was called "Deep Ecology"—you'd have appreciated the way over a hundred activists vulnerably exposed their deepening connection to place, expressed their gut-wrenching sense of loss at its destruction, and vowed to go on fighting it any way they can.

I'd hoped to strip you down in the workshop and daub you with mud for the Tribal Unity Dance, a war dance to strengthen us against the common enemy, the techno-patriarchal machine. A writhing passion. A rare opportunity for us wordy bastards to get non-verbal for a change, down to the "grunts and signs of pleasure" and the incessant heartbeat drum.

Dust swirled fifty feet into the air, like the ghosts of returning tribes, wolves and buffalo. A ghost dance. A celebration of vital life unhindered by concrete, custom or law. We were the new barbarians of the forest, regrouping and recharging for yet another assault on the new Roman Empire ("World Order"). A dance of joy. The dance of resistance is the only dance in town.

Re-wilding of the East

A great deal of work went into organizing the latest EF! campaigns, including protecting the Albion River in California, the Siskiyou Mountains in Oregon, roadless areas in Idaho, and Arizona's besieged Mt. Graham (scene of next year's Rendezvous). Other campaigns include wolf and grizzly reintroduction, forcing the Dupont Corp. to stop producing ozone-depleting CFCs and the re-wilding of the East.

As is EF! tradition, the gathering was followed by a Direct Action, protesting Amoco Corporation's push to get new roads and new wells into the relative pristine San Juan Mountains ecosystem. Four EF!ers locked themselves to the doors and vehicle gates of the regional Amoco headquarters in Durango, Colorado. The ranks of the arrested swelled when other activists placed themselves between the cops and those already in custody. Amoco was prevented for an entire day from continuing their rape of the wilderness, and another front is opened against the destroyers of the Earth.

No one imagines we are winning or changing people so dramatically that soon the natural world will be saved. We are only optimistic in Earth-time (geologic time), wherein spirit will go on manifesting itself in myriad new ways with or without human participation. But, as my friend John Seed notes, regardless of the consequences, win or lose, our actions will be the same. By acting on our feelings, instincts and truths, we validate our own worth, prove our integrity, and align ourselves with what we know to be the will-of-the-planet.

It's been years now since we did that initial outreach to the gay and pagan communities, to Anarchy, Ecomedia and our friends at the Fifth Estate. We've all learned a lot, minimized our hypocrisies, and, finally, recognized how much we have in common.

There are lots of symptoms, and lots of varied front lines in the struggle between the paradigms of freedom and control, nature and the machine. But there is really only one problem, and one cure. A portion of both can be found in us.

!Adelante, mis amigos! In solidarity!

FE Note: We highly recommend Lone Wolf Circle's new book, *Full Circle*. It indicts technoculture, spiritless situationism and New Age escapism. It will be available from FE Books next issue, which will also feature a review of it.

For a complete set of the documents in the FE/EF! debate which ranged from 1987 until the departure of founder Dave Foreman and others in the EF! "old guard," send \$7.50 to FE Books. This includes George Bradford's book, *How Deep Is Deep Ecology*, which began the exchange and subsequent issues of the FE.

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Fifth Estate #340, Autumn 1992

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