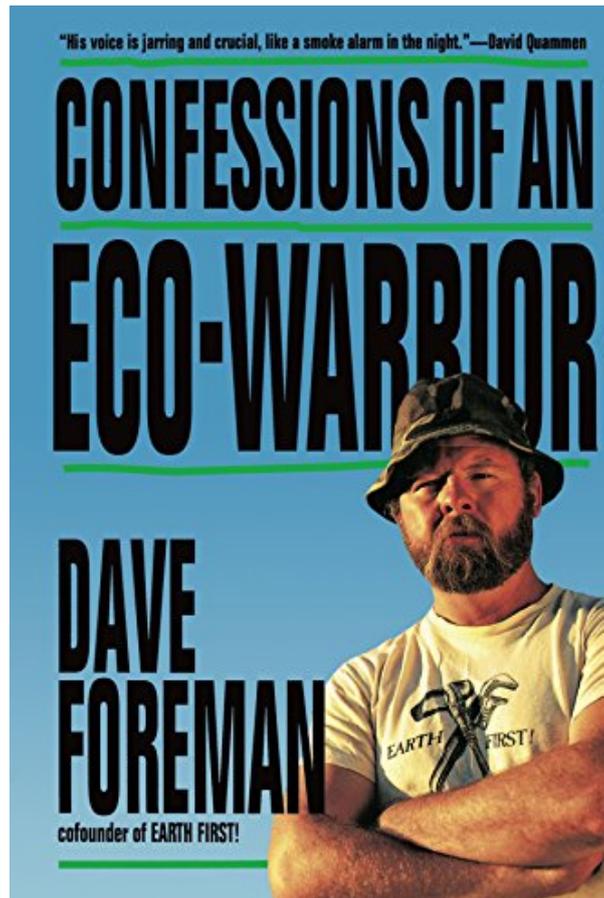


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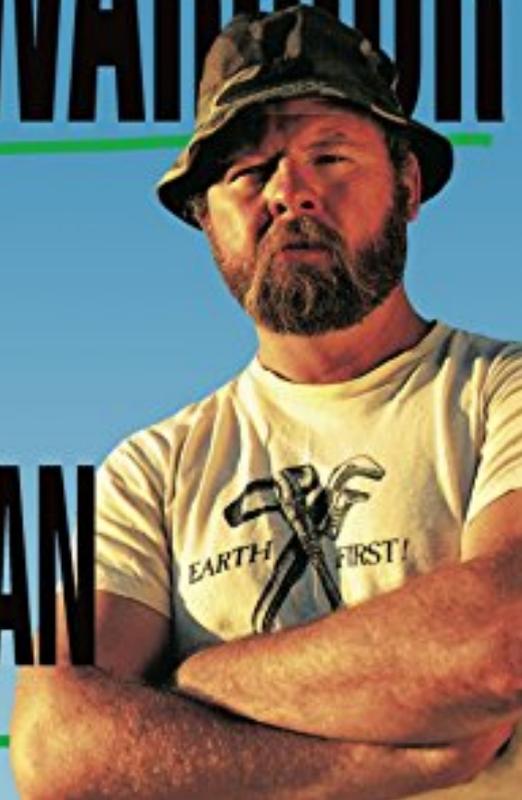


"His voice is jarring and crucial, like a smoke alarm in the night."—David Quammen

CONFESSIONS OF AN ECO-WARRIOR

**DAVE
FOREMAN**

cofounder of EARTH FIRST!



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About the Author

A cofounder and former member of Earth First!, Dave Foreman is currently chairperson of the Wildlands Project and Executive Editor of the Wild Earth report. He lives in Tucson, Arizona, where he produces an environmental catalog, *Books of the Big Outside*.

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CONFESSIONS OF AN ECO-WARRIOR BY DAVE FOREMAN PDF

A book that will set the course for the environmental movement for years to come, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* is an inspiring ecological call to arms by America's foremost and most controversial environmental activist. "Rude and brilliant. Read it and you will see the future".--William Kittredge.

- Sales Rank: #863767 in Books
- Color: Blue
- Published on: 1991
- Released on: 1993-11-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .75" w x 6.00" l, .78 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

Features

- ISBN13: 9780517880586
- Condition: New
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"I am a reluctant radical"

By R S Cobblestone

Confessions Of An Eco-Warrior is not a charming book. It's not full of Abbey-esque witticisms, or Quammen-esque insights into the nature world. It is a frank commentary by Earth First! cofounder Dave Foreman of his evolution, why he believes the Earth needs protection, and why he endorses a hands-on approach to protecting it. Is he perfect? "...I am no saint," Foreman writes (p. viii). "Passion and vision are essential, but without ACTION (in italics) they are empty" (p. 8). Action is the key to environmental protection, he claims. "And when we are inspired, we ACT" (p. 21). "We are the wilderness defending itself" (p. 50).

In this book, of particular interest are Foreman's discussion of the major ways wilderness is being destroyed, his principles of monkeywrenching (and his analysis of arguments against it... check out the chapter on tree-spiking), and "strategic monkeywrenching."

Is Foreman's way the only way? Foreman argues, no. "We need more diversity, not less, in the effort to protect three and a half million years of evolution from plundering by our international industrial growth society" (p. 173). "The deadliest trait of the True Believer, though, is a loss of tolerance for other approaches, for anyone whose ideas are not 'politically correct'" (p. 171).

Today? "...I am no longer part of the Earth First! movement. I no longer represent it and I am no longer represented by it" (p. 219). Sounds like lawyer-speak.

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Confessions of an Eco-Warrior

By Cwn_Annwn

Before they were taken over by politically correct left coast weenies Foreman's Earth First! was a very cool thing. They were "redneck hippies" who had a love for American wilderness and took radical steps to conserve it. Written after the FBI's attempt to set him up on bogus charges and after he left EF! Foreman lays out his ideas on conservation/ecology and his reflections on his life and times in the environmental movement. There is an emphasis on the wilderness in the western United States with Foreman but that's to be expected considering that's where he's from. Excellent auto-biography from an admirable man who has a lot of interesting ideas.

13 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

Confusions of an Eco-Warrior

By Joshua Christofferson

"A monkeywrench thrown into the gears of the machine may not stop it. But it might delay it, make it cost more. And it feels good to put it there."(Foreman, 23) - Dave Foreman

Author Dave Foreman is the cofounder of Earth First! and self-realized eco-warrior. Published in 1991, Foreman says the main purpose of his book is to motivate potential activists into action. His book lays out his reasoning for engaging in what he calls conservation. He portrays himself as a very mild-mannered, caring, and rational person, and not the radical eco-terrorist I was envisioning. But that should not deter the reader from the underlying message he is selling: humanity is secondary to air, water, land, and animals. And destruction of private property (sometimes risking the lives of humans) is the only means available to accomplish the preservation of Earth. While he lays out some very sound reasons as to why the environment (Earth) is under attack and needs human attention, his methods of execution harm the broader conservancy movement, make little impact on large-scale environmental destruction, and can be dangerous to innocent bystanders.

Of course, Foreman acknowledges that his methods are radical and fall outside of mainstream conservancy. He claims that larger organizations such as the Sierra Club have lost their vision and have become entangled in the bureaucracy of Washington. Foreman says that these mainstream environmental groups achieve nothing through lobbying and other bureaucratic modes. Foreman calls for direct action by motivated individuals to literally throw a monkeywrench into the gears of the machine. Foreman doesn't go into too much detail about how to do this, but makes it clear that disabling bulldozers or spiking trees are the only methods Earth-destroyers respond to (in tree-spiking, long metal nails are driven into trees. When loggers cut them down and send them to the mills, the saw blades are shattered by the spike therefore causing hundred or thousands of dollars in damage. Foreman addresses a specific instance where a saw blade was shattered and pieces of it flew into the faces of the workers. Foreman has the audacity to suggest that the tree-spikers were not to blame. The saw, he says shattered because it was old. A newer blade would've only been dismantled and rendered useless. This disregard for human safety is the core flaw of Foreman's logic. While he reluctantly condemns the use of tree-spiking, it grudgingly takes him awhile to come to that conclusion. Any sane person would see that these actions are destined to harm humans on multiple levels).

Earth First! Principals (quoted directly from the book. This "logic" pretty much says it all):

- A placing of Earth first in all decisions, even ahead of human welfare if necessary.
- A refusal to use human beings as the measure by which to value others.
- An enthusiastic embracing of the philosophy of Deep Ecology or biocentrism.
- A realization that wilderness is the real world.
- A recognition that there are far too many human beings on Earth.
- A deep questioning of, and even an antipathy to, "progress" and "technology."
- A refusal to accept rationality as the only way of thinking.
- A lack of desire to gain credibility or "legitimacy" with the gang of thus running human civilization.
- An effort to go beyond the tired, worn-out dogmas of left, right, and middle-of-the-road.
- An unwillingness to set any ethnic, class, or political group of humans on a pedestal and make them immune from questioning.

- A willingness to let our actions set the finer points of our philosophy and a recognition that we must act.
- An acknowledgment that we must change our personal life-styles to make them more harmonious with natural diversity.
- A commitment to maintaining a sense of humor, and a joy in living.
- An awareness that we are animals.
- An acceptance of monkeywrenching as a legitimate tool for the preservation of natural diversity.
- And finally: Earth First! Is a warrior society. "In addition to our absolute commitment to and love for this living planet, we are characterized by our willingness to defend Earth's abundance and diversity of life, even if that defense requires sacrifices of comfort, freedom, safety, or, ultimately, our lives. A warrior recognizes that her life is not the most important thing in her life. A warrior recognizes that there is a greater reality outside her life that must be defended. For us in Earth First!, that reality is Earth, the evolutionary process, the millions of other species with which we share this bright sphere in the void of space." (Foreman, 26-35)

MONKEYWRENCHING

"It is time for women and men, individually and in small groups, to act heroically in defense of the wild, to put a monkeywrench into the gears of the machine that is destroying natural diversity. Though illegal, this strategic monkeywrenching can be safe, easy, fun, and-most important-effective in stopping timber cutting, road building....." (Foreman, 113)

I find this aspect of eco-terrorism (ecotage or monkeywrenching as Foreman calls it) the most disturbing. He claims that since moderate, bureaucratic environmentalist groups such as the Sierra Club do nothing in the fight against the Earth-destroying forces, it is therefore up to subversive individuals to take matters into their own hands to stop the machinery of destruction. This, he states, is accomplished through the dismantling and destruction of these mechanisms one by one (spiking trees, rendering bulldozers useless, etc). Foreman claims that monkeywrenchers are acting under the same principles as the Boston Tea Party, Gandhi, the French Resistance, and even Martin Luther King Jr. He claims that in desperate times, laws must be subverted and broken in order to bring about a higher justice. I can agree with the logic that revolution over a corrupt system may be necessary from time to time, but he misses the key ingredient in his historical examples: unity. The American Revolutionaries, Gandhi's non-violence, the anti-Nazi movement, and the civil rights movement all had mass support behind them and were united in a specific cause. Eco-defenders are disjointed, have varying degrees of motivation, and all have different ideas of how environmental concerns should be addressed.

Foreman's assessment, however, is that organized resistance has been tried and doesn't work (he defeats his own logic here. By citing examples of historical, organized resistance, he fails to see that he is actually advocating the opposite: disjointed, random resistance). While Foreman condemns tree-spiking (extremely reluctantly, and with a slight wink-wink as if to say 'I have to say that for legal reasons, but go ahead anyway') he fails to realize the uncontrollable juggernaut he's unleashed. Using the theory of virtually unbridled ecotage, eco-warriors have started to use arson as their method of choice. The infamous Hummer dealership that was torched, the fires of Southern California are said to be linked to eco-terrorism, and the burning of housing developments in Arizona have all been very close to harming innocent bystanders. Of course the eco-defender would say that the fact that no humans were hurt is evidence that their actions are just. But as anyone can plainly see (except Foreman), the practice of ecotage is only a few steps away from

murder. Somewhere, somehow, somebody is going to be trapped in one of these fires and wind up dead. While Foreman may be able to shape his precise vision of minimally-destructive ecotage, he fails to realize that his approval of reckless youth engaging in unsupervised destruction of property is a recipe for disaster.

Besides the obvious dangers of ecotage to human life, has the practice of monkeywrenching really produced noticeable results? Sure, there's been lots of press and fear generated, but has a single one of these disjointed efforts stopped the great machine in anyway? Foreman acknowledges that the actions of individuals will only achieve small results. He seems to believe that all of these small steps will somehow add up to a reversal of eco-destruction. It is clear that it hasn't and won't. Hummers still roll off the assembly line, urban sprawl is still imminent, and forests are still harvested despite the efforts of a few flea bites.

Foreman's condemnation and frustration with the bureaucratic environmental groups is understandable. They seems to make a lot of noise, but don't really get much accomplished. After all, my air is still dirty, my water is still polluted, and my food is still laden with who-knows-what. I can understand why he would want to take more drastic matters in hand. While it is true that there is a desperate need to reshape the industries and governments which cause these unprecedented pollutants, doing so with such flawed logic as Foreman's is unproductive. Like the American Revolution or the civil rights movement, eco-defenders' only recourse will be unity in cause and action; a cause and action that puts humans on the same level as Earth and its other inhabitants, not as secondary citizens prone to harm.

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