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Earth First! Introductory primer "Only you...can prevent the destruction of all that's wild," n.d. [1997?]



Earth First!

Introductory Primer

NO COMPROMISE IN DEFENSE OF MOTHER EARTH

Only You... Can Prevent the Destruction of All That's Wild.

(Because If You Won't, Who Will?)

The Problem:

Today is the most critical moment in the three-and-a-half billion-year history of life on Earth. Never before—not even since the end of the Cretaceous, 65 million years ago—has there been such an intense period of extinction as we are now witnessing, such a drastic reduction in the biological diversity of this planet.

Over the last several hundred years, human civilization has declared war on large mammals, leading some respected ecologists to assert that the only large mammals to survive the near future will be those we humans choose to allow to live.

Other prominent biologists, aghast at the wholesale devastation of tropical rainforests and temperate old-growth forests, rapidly accelerating desertification, and destruction of "charismatic megafauna" due to habitat destruction and poaching, say that Earth could lose one quarter to one third of *all* species within a very few years.

Not only is the blitzkrieg against the natural world destroying ecosystems and their associated species, but our activities are now beginning to have fundamental, systemic effects upon the entire life-support system of the planet—upsetting the world's climate, poisoning the oceans, destroying the ozone layer which protects us from excessive ultraviolet radiation, changing the CO_2 ratio in the atmosphere, and spreading acid rain, radioactive fallout, pesticides and industrial contamination throughout the biosphere.

Indeed, some biologists have warned that vertebrate evolution may be at an end due to the activities of humans.

Clearly, the conservation battle is not one of merely protecting outdoor recreation opportunities; neither is it a matter of elitist aesthetics, nor "wise management and use" of natural resources. It is a battle for life itself, for the continuous flow of evolution.

We—this generation of humans—are at our most important juncture since we came out of the trees six million years ago. It is our decision, ours today, whether Earth continues to be a marvelously living, diverse oasis in the blackness of space, or whether the charismatic megafauna of the future will consist of Norway rats and cockroaches.

US Forest Service land management in the Olympic National Forest in Washington State

Why Earth First!

Are you tired of namby-pamby environmental groups? Are you sick of overpaid corporate environmentalists who suck up to bureaucrats and industry? Have you become disempowered by the reductionist approach of environmental professionals and scientists?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then Earth First! is for you. Earth First! is effective. Our front-line, direct action approach to protecting wildlands gets results. We have succeeded in cases where other environmental groups had given up, and have drawn public attention to the crises facing the natural world.

Earth First! was founded in 1979 in response to a lethargic, compromising, and increasingly corporate environmental community. Earth First! takes a decidedly different tack towards environmental issues. We believe in using all the tools in the tool box, ranging from grassroots organizing and involvement in the legal process to civil disobedience and monkeywrenching.

Earth First! is different from other environmental groups. Here are some things to keep in mind about Earth First! and some suggestions for being an active and effective Earth First!er:

First of all, Earth First! is not an organization, but a movement. There are no "members" of Earth First!, only Earth First!ers. It is a belief in biocentrism, that life—the Earth—comes first, and a practice of putting our beliefs into action.

While there is broad diversity within Earth First!—from animal rights vegans to wilderness hunting guides, from monkeywrenchers to careful followers of Gandhi, from whiskey-drinking backwoods riffraff to thoughtful philosophers, from misanthropes to humanists—there is agreement on one thing, the need for action!

The Warner Creek road blockade. Activists occupied this stockade for over 11 months to stop the Warner North timber sale. The Forest Service subsequently withdrew the sale.

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This introductory guide to the Earth First! movement was produced by The *Earth First! Journal* as a service for Earth First! local groups. It includes the purpose and definition of Earth First!, their philosophy, gatherings, an

EF! International section, and EF! projects. This edition focuses on extinction and prevention of wildlife destruction. It contains a guide to direct action by Edward Abbey and a guide for forming Earth First! groups.

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>
> —Earth First!

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