

Earth First!

Vancouver

- Earth First! is a radical, decentralized, non-hierarchical, all volunteer ecology movement. We are not a true "organization" as there is no official membership, although most Earth First!ers subscribe to the *Earth First! Journal*.
- Earth First! believes that the well-being of the ecosphere should be put ahead of the exclusive desires of any individual species, including the human species (ie. the whole is more important than any one of its parts). The destruction of the natural environment due to the greed of one species will result in the demise of all life which the whole encompasses. This idea is central to the ideology of Ecocentrism (also called Biocentrism), or Earth-centredness, which also purports that all species have the right to exist *for their own sake* regardless of any real or imaginary benefits they may have for humans. An Ecocentrist does not argue that the rain forests should be saved because the cure for cancer or AIDS may be found, but rather because the rain forests have their own right to exist.
- Specifically, Ecocentrism means that social issues (ie. the internal concerns of one species) are of lesser importance than ecological issues (ie. the concerns of the greater life community). This does not mean we must ignore the struggle for social justice, but rather social justice must be established *within the guidelines* of ecological justice first; this is strictly different from a superficial "balance" or compromise between social and ecological justice.
- Wilderness is the "bedrock" or foundation of true environmentalism. It is the natural environment in its pure, complete state where all natural species exist and evolved. To be an Ecocentrist, one must by necessity be a nature-loving wilderness freak. Wilderness preservation is not elitist; we are fighting first and foremost for the inherent rights of nature, not for recreational, scenic, or scientific opportunities. Earth First! is basically a wilderness defense movement.
- The dominant ideology of our time is one of Anthropocentrism, or human-centredness, which places one species at the centre of the universe while the rest of nature is viewed only in terms of its usefulness to humans. Industrial society is anti-nature by definition and is the result of extreme Anthropocentrism, which is characteristic of all industrial Capitalist, Socialist, and mixed economies. While many or most EF!ers may have left-wing inclinations in terms of human rights, Earth First! is not on the traditional Anthropocentric Left to Right spectrum which assumes the desirability of continued industrial growth. We are perpendicular to this spectrum; we are Ecocentrists.
- Anthropocentric environmentalism, as represented by Social Ecology, Eco-Feminism, "Green" Capitalism, and the general reformist environmental movement, places humans in a

dominant position as wise stewards of the whole ecosphere; wilderness preservation is either dismissed as elitist or viewed from a utilitarian perspective. While wise stewardship is essential for the maintenance of non-wilderness lands with a reduced biodiversity, there must always be extensive, *unmanaged* ecosystems for the free-flow of natural processes. Earth First! rejects all forms of Anthropocentrism.

- There are two basic components of environmentalism:

1. The preservation of wilderness.
2. The ecologically sustainable use of non-wilderness.

The latter focus refers to the replacement of our technological industrial society by one that will allow the perpetual existence of big wilderness, as well as the human species. There is no question that our growth-centred, polluting society must be completely replaced if ecological destruction is ever to be halted and reversed. Earth First!, however, is *not* a revolutionary organization. We have neither the organizational structure nor the means to do so. Our focus is solely on the first component of Ecocentric environmentalism: wilderness preservation.

- Earth First! realizes that environmental education is not an end in itself. If you believe that your only responsibility is to change the attitudes of other impure souls and not to take action yourself, then your own attitudes have not been sufficiently changed. Ideas mean nothing if they are not put into practice; action is the key. Those who know nothing about the tactics of a movement have nothing to say worth listening to about the politics of a movement.

- There is a common misconception that Earth First! sabotages machinery or "monkeywrenches." This is false. Any organized attempt at sabotage would invite police infiltration and subsequent prosecution. Earth First! *does* support the *idea* of monkeywrenching on a general level, as living beings are more important than non-living technology used to take life. The farthest Earth First! goes is direct action civil disobedience.

- By advocating visionary wilderness preserve proposals and the collapse of industrial society, Earth First! will redefine the parameters of the debate and dispel the myth that the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Greenpeace, and other mainstream organizations are "radical." This will allow these moderate groups more room to manoeuvre and increase their effectiveness. We need an extreme pro-environmental movement to counteract the anti-environmental extremists in control of society and industry. We seek credibility from no one except the Earth.

**Earth First! Vancouver, Box 21521, 1850 Commercial Dr,
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 4A0 Canada**