

The Epidemic of Extreme Environmentalism, Part 2

“The Push-Back”

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The callous disregard in which extreme environmental organizations hold the economic well-being of the American family has been in evidence of late. As the employment situation in our country continues to cause concern and the fear of recession grows ever larger, extreme environmental organizations think nothing of aggressively advocating for more expensive regulations dubiously designed to protect us from ourselves, as well as push for more and more closures of public land. In the off-road community, we are well aware of the havoc created by extreme environmentalists in their quest to destroy access to motorized recreation, but others are just now starting to wake up to the reality and the detrimental effects these organizations have on state and national economies. The current administration was forced to abandon efforts to enact new environmental laws in a bow to the severe economic consequences these regulations would have caused to American businesses. This is a direct acknowledgment of this political reality.

Extreme environmental organizations have become big businesses. Earthjustice, formerly known as The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, reports income at the end of the 2009 fiscal year of over \$27 million dollars¹, but has received over \$5 million dollars in revenue over the past two years from the American taxpayer through attorneys fees paid by the US Government after legal settlements. The Wilderness Society, in its most recent tax filing lists income ending the 2010 fiscal year of over \$30 million, with assets totaling over \$55 million. While these organizations continue to accumulate wealth and prosper, the average family in California has seen a downward decline in income, a decimation of recreational opportunities and the dwindling of resources as the state's economy continues to stagnate.

Central California, long known as the “bread basket” of the nation and considered one of the world's most productive agricultural areas, has become acutely aware of the problems caused by over-regulation as pushed by extreme environmental groups. Tom Nassif, President and CEO of Western Growers and Shippers, recently wrote of his frustration with these organizations.² *“Environmental group[s]...number in the thousands. They raise hundreds of millions of dollars, some of it by suing the government and collecting legal fees...they act like zealots who have received some God-given or nature-given power and directive to control what happens on earth. They have little regard for the truth and rarely hesitate to impose their views on others....and everyone who disagrees with them is wrong....Farmers know better—nature is not romantic.”*

Even the very basic freedom of decision to have children has become the target of extreme environmentalists. Witness the recent comments published by Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD);³ *“Virtually everything that is destroying wildlife habitat and the environment is driven by overpopulation....the bottom line is there are too many people using too many resources to be able to have a healthy environment.”* Mr. Suckling is also well known for encouraging extremists to use a position of strength to force

1 <http://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/assets/docs/earthjustice-990.pdf>

2 http://wga.com/article.php?art_id=33

3 <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/center/articles/2009/santa-fe-reporter-10-28-2009.html>

government agencies to bow down to the wishes of the CBD, and more often than not, after a barrage of lawsuits, federal agencies are brought down to the knees in acquiescence.

For off-roaders, farmers, and everyone who depends on motorized access, the machinations of extreme environmental groups have not been welcome, in fact they have been downright annoying and outwardly discriminatory in their effects. As a society, we have lost so much, we only have one choice to combat the future intentions of these organizations. We have to push back against the tide of extremists, push back against the federal agencies caving into their demands, and push back against those who are trying to take away our freedoms inherent as American citizens.

As extremists have reached the top of the political food chain, the rest of us have to form a strong political base that starts at the bottom of the pyramid. While we may not have the advantage in monetary assets at the moment, we have the advantage in sheer numbers of people who both care about the environment, and equally care about preserving our way of life. The California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) is dedicated to working together to aggressively combat the extremists by taking positions with federal agencies heretofore considered 'too aggressive' for off-road organizations to pursue. CORVA represents all those who employ motorized access for necessity or enjoyment, joining farmer and rock crawler, racer and rock-hounder, in an effort to represent the wants and needs of our local communities with those managing public land access. When that doesn't reap sufficient results, taking legal action against federal agencies is our only resort, and one we're not afraid to pursue.

In CORVA, we hear the calls for action from those on the ground, frustrated at the continuing losses of public land access, and are committed to following through with an aggressive offense. However we need your help, assistance and membership to achieve our shared goals. Many of us spend thousands both pursuing our favored form of motorized recreation and outfitting our vehicles, yet are resistant to paying \$30.00 to the one organization truly representing your interests throughout the state. As a community, giving to CORVA is giving back to yourselves and your families in increased motorized access and increased motorized enjoyment for years to come. Putting your money forth to fight the good fight for motorized access is a noble and necessary expenditure, one to be proud of supporting. Failure will only come about if we continue to complain about loss, and fail to give generously. We will have only ourselves to blame.