

The decline and fall of Friends of the Earth in the United States

LORNA SALZMAN

The environmental group Friends of the Earth (FOE) was founded in 1969 by David Brower in the United States. Since then offshoots have been established in numerous countries around the world as part of Friends of the Earth International, and some of them continue to carry out excellent environmental campaigning work. But in the US itself, the original FOE was destroyed, for all intents and purposes, in April 1986, as a result of a manipulated and 'corrupt Board of Directors' election process.

The history leading up to this acrimonious election was preceded by baseless nuisance lawsuits and scurrilous slanders against Brower by former friends and Board members, led by attorney Edwin Matthews Jr. and artist Alan Gussow, and has not been fully told. It is a cautionary tale for both the environmental and green movements. For some it sounds like the usual corporate in-fighting with rivalries and power plays; what makes it shocking is the feeling that environmental groups are somehow immune to such behavior.

The lesson is important for several reasons. First, it is a lessons of the need for built-in, pervasive accountability at all organizational levels, in all movements, and in particular accountability to members and potential constituents. Second, the environmental movement indulges in little self-criticism and even less of associates. Especially in Washington, it closes ranks against even friendly criticism and presents a united front in self-defense. Because of this, organization members rarely if ever learn how the organization is being managed or their money spent, what the group's strategies and policies are (except when they get urgent calls to write their representatives in support of positions developed by the Washington lobbyists), and have no opportunity to share in shaping the group's direction. This large void in accountability eventually results in a loss of members' and public trust.

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Collectively speaking, the major US environmental organizations, about a dozen of them, are supported by and/or represent as many as 50 million Americans. The dues paid by all the members (not counting special fund appeals, year-end contributions and foundation grants), result in a lot of money being paid out to these groups. But there is no reciprocal right granted to members to participate in or be privy to all organizational decisions. Moreover, money is solicited on behalf of the "public interest"—by the "good guys" fighting the "bad guys", who say; trust us, give us your money and we will protect your interests and the environment. But mostly what members get is a monthly publication telling them what has already been done, or whom to call or write, or asking for more money.

Nearly all these groups are tax-exempt and have tax-deductible affiliates for non-lobbying work like education and litigation. Their Boards consist of leading scientists, academics, attorneys (a preponderance, it seems), and corporate executives for whom such membership is a matter of pride (and a counterweight to their reputation and image as polluters). The Sierra Club, for example, is remarkably resistant to internal change. It was headed for most of the 1970s by a nuclear physicist, Lawrence Moss, and long refused to oppose nuclear power, and has yet to take any position against nuclear weapons development. A former president, Doug Wheeler, was a reputed supporter of Reagan. (Wheeler, executive director Michael McCloskey and Board member Michelle Perrault reportedly refused to meet with Nicaragua's former national parks director Jose Cardenal, who toured the United States under the auspices of Earth Island Institute's Environmental Project on Central America.)

Because of their public interest thrust, and the fiscal privileges conferred by the Internal Revenue Service, and not least because of the large sums of money contributed by the public to such groups, it becomes incumbent on them to insure that breaches of ethics and law as well as internal mismanagement be made known to members (and corrected) so they can decide whether they wish to support that group or put their money elsewhere. Environmental organizations cannot point out anti-environmental, anti-social actions of private corporations and simultaneously violate the special public trust put in them by dues-paying members and the public at large to whom they routinely appeal for money and support.

Before beginning my story of FOE, it is worthwhile listing a few acronyms.

FOE : Friends of the Earth, an environmental organization.

FEF : Friends of the Earth Foundation, an organization able to accept tax-deductible donations and provide grants to FOE.

PAC : Political Action Committee, an organization formally registered for election campaigning.

D.C. : District of Columbia, the small geographic and political area housing the city of Washington. the national capital. FOE-D.C. is the FOE

office based Washington, D.C. now merged with the Environmental Policy Institute.

Sierra Club, or Sierra for short : a long established US conservation group with national standing.

PIRG : Public Interest Research Group, one of many student organizations set up to do Research and campaigning for the public interest. PIRGs were originally the initiative of Ralph Nader.

FOE was founded in 1969 by Brower after he was forced from his position as Sierra Club Executive Director on the basis of ideological and style differences, though fiscal arguments were used to strengthen the case against him. Brower had made the Sierra Club a household word, multiplying its membership tenfold, carrying out a superb Exhibit Format book publishing program and taking the whole environmental movement into a new era that built upon and enriched its origins as a purely conservation movement. Whatever his failings as an administrator (and, in retrospect, as a judge of character), his vision was always clear and correct, his integrity unimpeachable. His was a voice for uncompromising aggressive defense of Nature.

Founding FOE, he brought with him loyal supporters from Sierra and put together a brilliant core staff in California that put FOE at the cutting edge of the movement despite its relatively small size. FOE immediately took the national lead in opposing nuclear power and later in promoting Amory Lovins' "soft energy" path, published the finest environmental publication in the country, *Not man Apart*, edited by Tom Turner for most of its seventeen years, and joined the front ranks of national membership groups. FOE was respected for its refusal to compromise, its broad vision, and its reliance on a loose, decentralized network of branches, field representatives, volunteers and a small well-informed staff.

There was never any doubt that Brower was in charge; Yet FOE gave great freedom and autonomy to branches and field representatives. Ideological and strategy disputes were few and far between until 1979, the year Brower resigned the presidency to Edwin Matthews, who was voted out the next year in favor of legislative director Rafe Pomerance. The decentralized nature of FOE that was its initial strength proved eventually to be its downfall, as people less scrupulous and less imaginative than Brower began to plot to wrest control away from him and his supporters in San Francisco, FOE's headquarters.

In 1975 Brower hired me as Mid-Atlantic Representative of FOE, and I headed the New York office, working closely with the New York branch of FOE, until Pomerance fired me in May 1984. Around the time that Pomerance became president in 1981, legislative director Jeff Knight moved from Washington D.C. to San Francisco, becoming administrative director of FOE and later of Friends of the Earth Foundation, assisted by Ron Rudolph. A FOE PAC (Political Action Committee) was set up in 1982 with

an outsider named Bob Chlopak, formerly of the national Public Interest Research Group, hired as its director. When Brower stepped down in 1980 as president, FOE finances were near the break-even point, and its membership was close to 30,000. Four years later, after triumvirate rule by Pomerance, Knight and Chlopak, assisted by Matthews and Gussow (who was FEF president), FOE was nearly \$700,000 dollars in debt and membership was down to about 16,000. (The organization merged with the Environmental Policy Center and the Oceanic Society in 1989.)

In spite of the fact that Brower had had little influence on management or on Board decisions since 1980, and despite the fact that management (Pomerance, Knight and Rudolph) and later the short-tenured executive director Karl Wendelowski and the Board ran the organization and signed the checks, and thus were responsible for FOE's financial state and administrative problems, the Board majority initiated a campaign to smear Brower and blame him for everything that had gone wrong between 1980 and 1985.

This campaign accelerated even as the Board itself countenanced increasing debt each year; the frustration of the San Francisco staff led to its unionizing to counteract the favoritism bestowed by Pomerance and Knight on selected staff, primarily those in Washington D.C. (The San Francisco staff were fearful of complaining to the Board because they claimed Knight would get revenge by holding up money owed them or by refusing to process their foundation grant proposals.)

During this period the Washington D.C. office, more and more the center of power, was continually at loggerheads with branches and field representatives because of the dominant role of D. C. in policymaking and their refusal to consult with branches and field representatives in developing legislative strategies. Chlopak made himself, with Board and management concurrence, the sole determinant of who would get FOE congressional endorsements, persuading the Board to endorse Walter Mondale for the Democratic presidential candidacy before the Democratic primary and over the objection of nearly the entire FOE staff. The Board rubber-stamped every request and proposal presented them by Pomerance, Knight and Chlopak, and the consolidation of the D.C. office's power, under Geoff Webb's control, was complete.

The truth was that FOE management (Pomerance, Knight and Rudolph, plus Chlopak and Webb who were technically only staff) not Brower, developed, implemented and oversaw all organizational decisions and finances since 1980, presiding over its fiscal and ethical decline. But at no time during this period did the Board hold management accountable for the dire state of the group or its finances. Instead, when the time came, they lashed out at Brower and his staff supporters.

This decline, which began during Pomerance's presidency in 1980 and continued until the sordid April 1986 Board election, was paralleled by ethically and legally questionable deals, mostly made, it was later discovered, in

private by management and handful of Board members, and by serious political compromises on important environmental legislation. As regional representative, working chiefly on nuclear power, I witnessed some of these compromises, and during Pomerance's tenure I conveyed to board members in numerous written memoranda and phone conversations my growing concern for internal mismanagement, authoritarianism, FOE's readiness to compromise the domination by the D. C. office, and "Potomac fever" whereby FOE's lobbyists in the capital cared more for the opinions of, and access to, Congressional aides than for the interests and concerns of FOE members or the environmental community at large.

In 1982, I received a bulk mailing, signed by the Mayor of Hertford North Carolina, William D. Cox, from a group of prestigious Democrats seeking to oust the conservative Senator Jesse Helms and replace him with then-Governor James Hunt. One of the signers was a North Carolinian, and then president of the Sierra Club, Denny Shaffer. It just so happened that I had been in contact with certain North Carolina activists who had criticized Hunt for foisting a toxic waste dump on their community, which was a rural, poor, largely black area in Warren County. I had obtained copies of letters from 1979 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, which, in deference to personal requests from Hunt, had readily waived three of their criteria for toxic waste dump siting, so as to allow the Warren County dump to go ahead. One of the criteria waived was the requirement that dumps be at least 100 feet above groundwater, whereas the Warren County site had water fifty feet beneath the ground.

Seeing Shaffer's name on this promotional mailing for Hunt upset me, but since it was possible that he was unaware of Hunt's role in the dump siting, I took the liberty of writing him, on FOE stationery, as an environmentalist and Sierra Club member, recounting the dump issue and Hunt's efforts, pleading with him not to support Hunt, and explaining why I believe it important that environmentalists reject the "lesser of two evils" syndrome in endorsing candidates.

I got no reply but another complainant who wrote him on this issue got a letter saying ".....I find the outrage about Gov. [Governor] Hunt's decision to be almost totally in NY and NJ [New York and New Jersey]: Those outraged have little or no firsthand knowledge of the matter or the Governor (who) is clearly more sensitive to human rights and environmental protection than any governor in N.C. [North Carolina] in the past thirty years." (The Sierra Club's PAC has often endorsed candidates who have voted wrong on environmental issues, such as New York Senator Daniel Moynihan, who actively supported the proposed "Westway" interstate highway project in Manhattan and worked to repeal federal laws to facilitate its approval, and Representative William Green, a supporter of nuclear power who favored aid to the contras in Nicaragua. FOE itself, over

the strenuous objection of the New York branch, endorsed Representative Joseph Abbaddo, a major player in the machinations to approve Westway. Westway had been New York FOE's top environmental issue and the FOE PAC endorsement was deeply resented by New Yorkers.)

I was reprimanded by Pomerance, ostensibly for writing on FOE stationery, but primarily, as I learned later, because Chlopak planned a FOE PAC campaign in North Carolina around the issue of toxics to promote Hunt.

In 1983, the issue of who would be the Democratic presidential candidate to oppose Reagan arose in FOE. Chlopak, Pomerance and Knight, along with Knight's assistant Ron Rudolph, were running FOE as a private fiefdom and went to the Board to get the endorsement for Mondale before the primary. Chlopak flaunted a staff poll he had done that, he claimed, supported the endorsement, although the poll had been limited to the loyal Washington staff and to selected Chlopak supporters elsewhere. An alternate poll conducted in San Francisco showed overwhelming opposition to endorsing *anyone* before the primary, and substantial opposition to Mondale in particular. This was ignored by the Board, which went for Mondale.

But what was arguably the most serious political and ethical compromise (at least until the events of 1984-1985) took place in 1981-1982, when Congressman Morris Udall, having wrapped most of the Washington environmental community around his little finger, pushed through ill-advised high-level radioactive waste legislation with the support of the Sierra Club Environmental Policy Center and Environmental Action (with FOE cheering them on from the sidelines, it turned out). Sierra later reversed itself and opposed the bill—too late to turn tide—but its lobbyist, Brooks Yeager, reportedly continued to support and lobby for it.

Udall had drawn up a bill that gave the nuclear industry everything it craved. It waived parts of the national Environmental Protection Act, made citizen redress in court difficult, and reduced states' rights in siting procedures. It also provided for retrievable surface storage, a concept rejected ten years earlier, which would make commercial spent fuel available for eventual reprocessing for weapons or for fast breeder reactors. All these provisions and others earned Udall a public commendation from the nuclear industry after the bill was passed for resisting the efforts of the anti-nuclear community to amend the bill.

FOE's D.C. lobbyist Renee Parsons told me FOE opposed the bill, but neither she nor anyone else in Washington was willing to lift a finger to rouse up public opposition, much less publicly *state* their opposition, except for Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service. This was a double blow, because Udall had circulated a memo to Congress claiming the support of the *entire* environmental community for his bill ("all" in this case meant three groups, later to when Sierra dropped out, but since no groups were actively opposing it, the

supporters took prominence).

In New York City I went to work, organizing a coalition of local and regional groups to oppose the bill. I sent out an analysis and history of the Udall bill, giving reasons why it was bad for the public and good for the nuclear industry, and why the groups (I named them) supporting it were wrong. I organized a letter and telegram campaign, send press releases to media and Congress, and got about 25 local groups and alliances to oppose it. I also asked the FOE D.C. office for help in organizing a press conference in Washington to counteract publicly Udall's claim of unanimous support, and asked Brower and Knight to intervene personally with other groups who had not gotten involved, so as to create a counter-coalition of groups against the bill and thus send a message to Congress that Udall was misrepresenting his support.

I got no help from Parsons or FOE-D.C except an offer of a press list from Parsons's assistant, Caroline Petti (Parsons was working on other issues or out of town during most of the battle). But the letter I had written to Udall, contesting his claim of broad support and criticizing the bill's contents, enraged FOE-D.C. The head of the office was Liz Raisbeck, who was so uninformed on nuclear matters that she had never heard of the Clamshell Alliance in New England. (She is now a senior vice-president of the National Audubon Society.) When I went to Washington DC for Ralph Nader's Critical Mass conference, I was herded into Pomerance's office, the doors closed behind me, and sternly lectured by Pomerance, Raisbeck and Parsons for "washing dirty linen in public" (i.e. writing to Udall and informing anti-nuclear groups why the Washington groups were wrong). "We have to work with these people", pleaded Parsons.

But their discomfort and anger had to have deeper roots. I had clearly embarrassed them in more serious ways than just criticizing D.C. groups. Why was Parsons so upset at my efforts to rouse up opposition in New York? Why had FOE-D.C. refused to lobby or take any public stance on the bill to clarify FOE's purported opposition to Congress? Why had FOE, ostensibly opposed to the bill, not tried to persuade non-committed groups to oppose it, as I had suggested?

I took the frontal approach and called Ruth Caplan of Environmental Action and Dave Berick of the Environmental Policy Center, which was leading the support. In the course of these discussions bits of the truth emerged and then converged, proving beyond a doubt that despite Parsons, and FOE's remonstrations about their opposition to the bill, they had in effect given Berick the green light to act on their behalf. Berick was angry with Parsons for good reason; he came to realize, while talking to me, that Parsons had told me one thing (FOE was against the bill) but signaled to him that they weren't going to raise any significant opposition to it and that whatever he decided was all right with FOE.

FOE-D.C. had intentionally deceived me and Berick now knew it. He

referred to private meetings with Udall to get amendments that would partially satisfy critics; at least one of these was a meeting only with the Environmental Policy Center and perhaps Yeager of the Sierra Club, who reportedly offered to *relinquish* some of the amendments already conceded by Udall. Even Environmental Action had been excluded from this meeting: later, after denying it took place, Caplan discovered that in fact it had. (She later apologized to me tearfully.)

Why was FOE supporting Udall at all, after acknowledging how bad the bill was? FOE had never before felt the need to conform to ill-advised and inconsistent positions and had cut an independent path on legislation without compromise, one of its strongest attributes. Why had it changed now and who was responsible?

I found out later, inadvertently from Raisbeck herself at a FOE staff meeting in San Francisco, who recollected that the former head of the Environmental Policy Center, Louise Dunlap, had visited Pomerance to discuss the bill. Dunlap had a long history of cozy cooperation with industry: her husband Joe Browder once tried to take over FOE, and failing this, set up the Environmental Policy Center where he worked on natural resource issues while continuing to maintain close ties to the American Coal Association. Dunlap apparently insisted that FOE support the bill and Pomerance had acceded, in turn probably instructing Parsons accordingly.

Parsons soon left FOE; the bill passed the House easily; although some Congressmen were apprehensive about it, the absence of environmental opposition assuaged their doubts. Raisbeck later circulated a memo to FOE staff, asking whether Parsons' job as nuclear issues lobbyist should be filled; based on her belief that "not much" was happening with nuclear issues in D.C., the position was never filled. The Atomic Industrial Forum could not have done a better job of de-clawing FOE's anti-nuclear work than FOE itself did under Pomerance and Raisbeck.

As FOE's debt over the next few years mounted to nearly \$700,000, Board and management realized that desperate measures were needed to rescue FOE. At the same time they knew that this opportunity would enable them to consolidate their grip on FOE, impose their own agenda on the direction of the group, and purge the pro-Browder staff on fiscal grounds, which meant the entire San Francisco office, the administrative and publishing headquarters. They began to lay plans for dismantling FOE and for moving it to Washington, quietly spreading anti-Browder propaganda among neutral board members and trying to deflect the blame for the financial crisis away from themselves and onto Browder. The opening shots in the virtually total purge of FOE staff took place in 1984; I was fired in May of that year, and Browder in mid-summer.

Earlier that year, Chlopak had drawn up a list of proposed Congressional endorsements for the FOE PAC and dutifully circulated it to staff for comment, which he later ignored. On the list was a freshman Congressman

from New York State who had not been in Congress long enough to develop a clear pro-environment voting record. Because of this, and because I believed that local branches and field representatives should have the deciding voice in endorsements (or in withholding them), I wrote to Chlopak and demanded veto power over endorsements within New York State for myself and the New York branch of FOE. Three days later I got a telegram from Pomerance dismissing me for purportedly "usurping" the Board's powers of endorsement, although all I had done was to *ask* for veto power, and all he had to do was deny it. I had finally given Pomerance the excuse he needed to fire me.

But the worst was still to come. Two months later, in a conference call of the FOE Board (later deemed illegal by the courts), they fired Dave Brower as chairman. His crime: opposing the Board/management plan to fire over half the staff to stave off financial collapse. Brower had placed an ad at his own expense in *Not Man Apart* appealing to members for money to prevent the staff cuts. Although the Board had specifically authorized Brower to seek such funds, they were enraged because Brower had the audacity to inform members via the FOE newspaper what the Board was doing. They confiscated and shredded all but about 300 copies of the paper and then demanded that Brower swear a "loyalty oath" not criticize or contradict management policies or decisions, a declaration that would have put Brower in clear violation of his duties as Board member. He refused and they fired him, illegally as it turned out; he was reinstated later that summer after threatening to call a special members' meeting to tell members the full story.

Upon his reinstatement, Brower was advised by his lawyers to demand the resignation of those Board members who had concurred in his firing, on grounds that they could not be trusted and could come back in a month and fire him legally. Brower, always reluctant to confront his opponents, did not follow this advice, and his failure to oust the treacherous Board members was to be the undoing of the whole organization. They used the next year and a half fruitfully, carefully plotting to eliminate Brower supporters, twisting the arms of uncommitted Board members, bad-mouthing Brower, and passing resolution after resolution to consolidate their power and undermine the position of the pro-Brower staff.

A recapitulation of the major Board and management actions over the year and a half preceding the 1986 election is extremely instructive and revealing. Most of the anti-Brower directors of FOE and FEF consider themselves (and were probably considered by the public) liberal or progressive. Many were prominent in peace, community activism, environmental education, progressive science, alternative agriculture and other social change issues. Wes Jackson heads The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas; Paul Berks is a clergyman who has participated in non-violent sit-ins at the Rocky Flats Arsenal in Colorado; Mark Terry is a noted environmental and energy educator; Anne Ehrlich is a leading scientist and active, like her husband

Paul, in population and endangered species issues; Ann Rossevelt is the wief of James Roosevelt, a liberal Democrat active in Massachusetts politics; Alan Gussow is a well-known artist; David Sive is considered to be a founder of environmental law; Edwin Matthews Jr., although an attorney at Coudert Brothers, a large international law firm with corporate clients, was founder of FOE in France and a long-time personal friend of Brower; Rafe Pomerance is from the wealthy Wertheim family that includes nature writer Anne Simon and Barbara and the late Jessica Tuchman, and his mother Jo was a dedicated peace activist for many years. It is hard to imagine these individuals as conspiratorial evils-doers. Whatever their motivations, here is a partial list of their actions at FOE between 1980 and 1986, actions taken over the objections of Brower and his supporters on the Board.

- terminated FOE's anti-nuclear lobbying in D.C.
- ended the internationally prominent International Project for soft energy Paths
 - terminated the entire branch program
 - closed the San Francisco office and moved it to Washington D.C.. a move that may have cost FOE a quarter of a million dollars
 - made executive director Wendlowski publisher of *Not Man Apart* to enable him to control all material being printed
 - refused to act on a legally authorized resolution by the Board minority members calling for a special members' meeting
 - issued a "gag order" prohibiting directors from using membership lists, to prevent members from finding out Board actions and from requesting a special membership meeting as is their right
 - demoted international and wildlife program directors in San Francisco and put them under control of the D.C. office
 - vehemently resisted the unionizing of the San Francisco office (the decision to move to D. C. may have been motivated largely by this anti-union feeling)
 - terminated all FEF payroll grants to FOE, including the chairman's fund
 - hired a law firm charging \$150 per hour, at FOE expense, to file groundless lawsuits against Brower: refused to set limits to this litigation
 - continued to appeal to members for funds for four FOE programs, three of which had already been discontinued because of staff cuts
 - campaigned during the election process against Brower and for the Board majority and prospective directors, in violation of FOE by-laws
 - refused to send members' ballots by first-class mail; many were received late or not at all, thus disenfranchising at least 18% of the members
 - made vicious *ad hominem* attacks against Brower at Board meetings.
- In another instance, FOE took foundation grant money, solicited and earmarked for its marine mammals program headed by Dave Phillips in San Francisco; and spent it on its mid-west office and on moving the headquarters to Washington D. C. The foundation learned of this misuse of its grant

money and sued FOE in 1988 for the money and for damages. Reportedly the then directors of FOE settled out of court.

But there was more. Rafe Pomerance resigned in July 1984, probably to get off the hot seat, and over the next months Chlopak and Knight left too, under mysterious circumstances (a memo of Chlopak to the Board indicated he was not leaving voluntarily). In January 1985, while FOE was seeking a new executive director, Brower decided to look into FOE's financial state and asked a lawyer to go through all the papers and accounts. The lawyer discovered a series of memos to and from Knight, Pomerance, Chlopak and interim president Dan Luten, regarding two large severance payments to Chlopak and Knight (who signed his own check), nearly \$30,000 paid without the knowledge or consent of the Board, in violation of New York State non-for-profit corporate law and of FOE by-laws. The payments, authorized secretly by Gussow, Luten and treasurer Bob Galen, constituted half of FOE's entire cash balance for 1984, when the debt hovered near \$700,000.

And there was still more. Chlopak had demanded and received, before leaving, indemnification from FOE against all future lawsuits that might arise as a result of his employment with FOE, as well as the right to censor any and all public statements that FOE might make in the future regarding his tenure there. It also turned out that FOE president Alan Gussow, also a FOE director, had committed FOE to paying half of the severance payments, although the FEF Board had never discussed or approved it. After the FOE Board refused to hire counsel to investigate the legality of the payments, FOE voted to do so over Gussow's objections; but there is no indication that the investigation took place or that any results were reported to FOE or FOE.

After the memos were made public, the FOE directors met quickly to cover their tracks. Vetoing resolutions calling for an impartial investigation and demanding return of the money, they voted to authorize the payments after the fact, to head off possible member lawsuits for violation of fiduciary trust, FOE by-laws and New York State law. The whole affair was swept under the rug. Immediately after this emerged, I wrote a memo to the Board, rhetorically inquiring whether all these things were true and demanding justice and redress on behalf of FOE's members and reputation. Soon after I received a phone call from prominent environmental attorney David Sive, member of the FEF Board, implying that I could be sued for slander if I didn't keep quiet. ("Do you want to be a martyr?" he asked; I replied "No, I want justice".) In retrospect I realized that he ment to intimidate me, out of fear that I or others might in fact sue the Board.

In 1985; Brower, who had been sued by the Board, under Edwin Mathews' insistence, as pure harassment, filed countersuits and demanded that the Board act on the minority directors' vote requesting a special membership meeting. Brower had put together a replacement slate (in which I was included) for those directors whose terms were expiring, plus a resolution calling for the removal of the rest of the Board majority. To head

off a court-supervised election, the Board agreed to have a special mail vote, but then did all they could to drag their feet and stack the deck against Brower.

They promoted their own candidates in violation of FOE by-laws; They sent ballots third-class mail (many never arrived); they campaigned in special mailings at FOE expense, violating FOE by-laws, sending out letters full of vicious and unsubstantiated claims against Brower and misrepresentations of Board policies and actions regarding the fiscal crisis, the move to D.C. and other issues. Brower and his slate lost by 180 votes out of 6000 cast. Brower resigned from the Board in the fall of 1986.

The lessons learned from FOE have pertinence to other environmental groups, and to other movements as well, especially in the area of accountability. Environmentalists themselves, in the halls of Congress and the state legislatures, are familiar with bureaucratic insolence, arrogance and unresponsiveness, in contrast to the deferential response shown to powerful special interests with money and clout. The same kind of accountability to constituents that would help keep elected officials honest is that which the green movement, in its founding principles, has demanded of itself, and which it is therefore entitled to demand of others. Nowhere has this organized contempt for voters and the public-like that of the FOE Board/management for its members-been more clearly shown than in the regulatory agencies that environmentalists routinely monitor and petition: the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, state public utility commissions, Federal bureaus like the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. These bureaus make their own laws, act as their own enforcers, and function both as judge and jury. The experience of environmentalists in trying to overcome the autonomy of such agencies should have taught them lessons about the need for equivalent accountability within their organizations.

The environmental movement was shaped in an earlier era, when hierarchy and centralized leadership were the rule, when the expertise and judgment of those higher up went unchallenged, when the warm glow of idealism and enthusiasm seemed eternal. But such hierarchy does not build movements or bring social change. It builds rigid managerial attitudes and structures, a self-sufficient "old boy" network that puts forth a benevolent face but refuses to share power in the same way that the government agencies and private corporations they oppose reject their social responsibilities. Furthermore, the environmental professionals in D.C. continue to look to the local communities to support *them* not *vice versa*: to send money for the projects they deem important; to write letters on issues of their choosing, not those that address local concerns; to support the strategies they have developed privately in Washington, with Congressional aides and others, without input from members of communities.

This must be turned around. The Washington environmental organizations should be serving the needs and interests of members and of local groups, not running a private professional enclave. ☐