

Earth First! Rally (1987)

February 23, 1987

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Shot by Austin filmmaker Ken Zarker, this video documents an Earth First! rally held in Austin on February 23, 1987. Speakers include prominent environmentalists Ned Fritz and Dave Foreman. Earth First! began in 1979 as a radical environmental group guided by the philosophies of conservation biology and deep ecology. Jaded by political inaction, the movement's activists employed direct-action tactics to disrupt commercial logging operations, drawing both major media attention and the ire of business leaders, politicians, and law enforcement. Internal dissension over the direction of the movement prompted the departure of several founders, including Dave Foreman, in 1990. Earth First! nevertheless continued to grow, with active groups now all over the world.

Dave Foreman: Never stop howling. Don't let them take your howl away from you. If we howling up, we'll hear the real howl of the wolf in Texas once more.

Unknown EF! Speaker: Bug is our hero. God will sing you a wonderful song. About bogus and the beast. Later on tonight. Anyway, that is still an ongoing issue. 4 nights has not been resolved. The attorney general filed suit against the US Court of Service. Unfortunately, because of our weak laws, the US Forest Service won that case. But the attorney general is still considering appealing, so we suggest that you write Jim Maddox. And urge him to continue the battle to save 4 notch. And to save. All of the national forests in Texas. Add additional wilderness to those wilderness areas that we have. We only have 34,000 acres of wilderness in Texas and that's pretty neat. Outside of the addresses of genetics and the Congress people and the US Forest Service officials that you should write about four notch. Well, I'm not going. To get too long winded because Ned will be able to tell you a lot more about what you. Can do and. What activities in East Texas are really of importance? So on that note, I'll introduce Ned Fritz, father of East Texas Wilderness.

Ned Fritz: Thank you, daughter Barbara. I got a new one tonight. Fella levers of mother Earth. I'm here to share with you some of the worthwhile things that we're doing. Some of you can camped with me. All the way from East Texas to Oregon and Bill Oliver, who will be here tonight, is camp with us in East Texas. And also if I run into him all the way to the East Coast where he is really inspiring lots of people to get into the struggle and the joy of. Saving our wealthiness. Now I'm here with James Jackson, who is one of the saving figures in our East Texas wilderness areas. These are newly saved. This is a new vital part of the environmental movement that we're working with here tonight and. Listening to and enjoying the music of and this is the book. Realms of beauty. It's about the five wilderness areas of East Texas, and these were just designated by Congress in 1984. In fact in. October of 1984. So it's just been. A short time that we've had. And then last year, well, Congressman Wilson.

Who had first? Proposed and then joined in our getting these bonuses. That got us an additional. 1000 acres and more to add to and fill in the niches in these. And this year he has announced that he is going to work for some more edition Start wildernesses to make them big enough for us all to enjoy and for the unfortunately vastly booming populations of the future to enjoy. So that's part of what we're doing now. We're going over to these bonuses and I want to hope that some of you all will get into this movement with us, will join us in these. Packers and will join us in the fund that's involved and the way to do that, if you haven't already gotten onto a mailing list, is to sign up just to be in the network. We hope everybody will sign up tonight. There's A tag pad outside to sign up your. Name and address. And you're not joining anything when you do that. In fact, as far as Earth person is concerned, nothing to join. It's a disorganization, as you probably heard. And but you will get the mailings and you. Will hear about things.

Dave Foreman: It's a pleasure to be here. There's two other people here in the room with us. That none of you see. 2 great, Wonderful Texas earth firsters. And I wanna drink a bear to lease a brand. And bug asparagus. Also like to say it's a pleasure to. Be in Austin. Have Ken folks here and go way back to Moses family. In fact, I was raised down around Sandton Town and my first wilderness experiences. From the Guadalupe River as a Boy Scout back in the late 50s here in Texas. So it's sort of nice to be home here. Now, rivers really are a great. Place to have a profound wilderness experience, and I had one of the. Really important experiences of my life on a river. Once Colorado River flowing through the Grand Canyon. In Arizona. Probably the ultimate float trip in America, the ultimate Canyon in the world. One of. Unique places on this planet. We had a hell of a time flying to Colorado. We did run into a little problem for a while trying to get my rap with 40 cases of beer on it through Crystal Rapids, but after that excitement we decided we just had to lighten the load and drink more beer. So we began to work real hard on that. I hate the damn things. Certainly we worked. On down the Colorado River, just marveling in the scenery and lightening the load. All the way. Finally, we got down the lava falls below. Your mom goes a big wrap into the grand, our water warning threat. 20 foot waves 20. It's impressive. We pulled over to the side there on the beach and got out and scattered our path through there. And decided there wasn't any path and the only thing to do was drink another case of beer and go for it. Let's see, so we were sitting on the beach drinking our beers. And everybody has to pull in their stout the lap and sort of wake or turn to go through it. And an official Park Service float trip pulled up. And they got out and the Park Rangers. That were rolling through. It seemed like pretty good guys. They checked out the rap, but. There was this guy with. And there was this really obnoxious. Guy with heart service. He was wearing a three piece suit. He had on guchy shoes looked like he'd never been off a sidewalk before in his life, really. He was funny looking poo. Ohh big thick. Glasses. This guy was a world class jackass. Here we are sitting on this beach drinking Shiner beer. Getting ready to go through a lot of falls and this guys

walking up and down on the beach. I hate to paddle. I hate to water. When's this Helicopter gonna get me out of Grand Canyon Park.

This guy was really raining on our wilderness parade. And he looked familiar. I can't split that. I had to figure Out where I've Seen him before? All of a sudden that we lastly was like leaving for me please suffering summer with my wife jacking off and said you might look at me, plenty of son of a Wildcat that lives in the old original half. Grizzly, half wolf, half rattlesnake course. Take her for the summer, Thunder and fire. Hurricane Vampire earthquake. Small box on the mother's side. Barrel whiskey. Dead bulldozer can't get them. With my clamps. Switch the sound of oil rigs when I speak the blood of timber executives is my natural drink. My ears. So cast your eye on me and. Pray you half human playing grape and anti environments. Come back because. I'm about to. Eat you for lunch!

And I figured Jim White would fly right out of the Grand Canyon without his helicopter gun, so you can imagine how surprised I was. And he just looked me in the. Eye and went. File your neck and spray and environmental extremists because a pet child of ecological calamities, supporting holy Thunder, Sweet Jesus from feel the power sword here. Sunglasses for all don't attempt to look at me with the naked eye. Playful mood I used. Some gradients of latitude the parallels. The same. Like drag the Atlantic Ocean for whales. But I'm cold out. Boil that cold Mexico with radioactive waste. And I'm bathing when I'm hot down the river. To the West to make electricity and air condition. The deserts suck the Edwards Aquifer drive. When I was thirsty. The destruction of endangered species is the pastime. Idle moments and the. Devastation of whole ecosystems, the serious business of my life so. File your neck and spray. Environmental stringers cause the Kingdom of industrial style of the jumper. Well, I've learned something from that encounter. Rhetoric is not enough. Whatever we say to them. They can say right back at us. So how do we go beyond rather? And I think the whole environmental movement has been wrapped up and ready and often fails to go beyond, I think her first, if it's anything. As sort of a fundamentalist revival within the environmental. It's a revival of. Trying to get back to the. Basics away from them. The glare of the lights in Washington DC. Being at the heart of power, being part of an established. the making deals the Co option the compromise. We want to get back to the basics. And the first way to get back to the basics is get back to what John Muir was. Talking about. The genius of John Muir the great insight John Muir had was that we are not alone. That we are connected, that we are not apart. That everything ties together. We can ask ourselves why wilderness. Why protect natural diversity? Why protecting that Princess areas in East Texas are the Big Bend country? Why try to save land from development? Why wilderness? Is it because it makes nice picture postcards? Are pretty coffee table books that if they had legs on them they could be. A coffee table on themselves. Because because it's a nice place to go. Burn off steam and get rid of stress after five days in front of the video display terminal. Does that protect watersheds? Preserve resources for future generations. To decide how to abuse. By wilderness. I don't think it's any of those reasons. Wilderness for its own

sake. Because it is. Because willingness is. 3 1/2 billion years of evolution. Because it's home. It's a real world. It's a flow of life. It's nothing static, it's a dynamic, living, breathing thing. It's a living planet. Like Grizzly bear out there, snuffling along Pelican Creek in Yellowstone National Park. Has just as much right to her as you do to yours. That alligator over in the big thicket. Digging up a huge pile of organic material to wire our eggs in has just as much right to have a hole in family as anyone of you do. Has intrinsic value inherent worth? You don't. Have to figure out. The dollar amount to make something worth something? To human beings. It doesn't have to be worth something to human beings. It is. It's followed that same 3 1/2 billion year path of evolution. It's here. That's a lie. That's why it should exist. We have no right to totally pave, conquer, develop, use, exploit every square inch of the planet. They've got to find the self restraint to say no. That we aren't going to go into this place or that place that we're going to leave it alone. Let things be. Show this self restraint of the wise and. You know, we're so afraid of life. We're so afraid of being part of this planet. When we die, we want to put pickle juice in our veins and lay ourselves in a lead box. It will never decay, so we'll never go back into the. Flow, so we can't. Be part of the nitrogen cycle or the water cycle, or the energy cycle. We want only take from the Earth and even when we die, we don't want to give it back. Yeah, coming from. All the high than us put us in a lead box. That's the final cop out the final way. Not to live. You remember a number of years back, ten years or so ago, when all the ranchers in New Mexico and Colorado were freaking out. Because the cattle mutilations. You remember the cattle mutilations. Cattle were being found dead laying out there. No sign on the outside of their body. But their livers were gone. I mean something weird was going on. And the ranchers were freaking out. Evidently, a bunch of satanic worshipping hippies or little green men and flying saucers were coming down and doing strange things to the cows, the ranchers. Were upset, so they hired a retired FBI agent. To find out what was going after this happens, what was. Doing these cattle mutilations. So he took all the latest equipment out, sniper scopes, Starlight scopes, all this Vietnam technology. They staked out some dead cows, and he watched them every. Night for a week. Just sat there in his blind with the Starlight scope. Watching the deck pass. You know what it was? It wasn't little green men and flying saucers. It wasn't hippies. Tim was. Wasn't even Jim.

You know what it was? Weasels like to eat? Callum really soft. But there's a problem. There's all this hair and eye. And bone and muscle. And the weasel and the lever. How's the weasel supposed to get? Weasels aren't done. They walk around to the. Rear end of. The dead cow. And there's this little passageway.

So then on the.

Lip eats all at once out cleans itself off.

Goes home for the day.

*** **** it. The crunch of my phones. I don't wanna be pickled and put the lead box. Wanna live forever? I wanna scamper around in the forest.

I will live.

Because I love life and I love this planet. I want to be recycled into. These other things. And that, I think is real biosynthesis or deep ecology to accept the fact that you are going to eat and take from the earth within, you're going to give back and look forward to that glorious day and you can become a weasel or a Buzzard. But if you can, if you can take that.

That step of.

Recognizing that everything does have inherent value, if you can get back in touch with the wholeness and the unity of life on the planet. Then you can take another step. That's a step of vision. Too often we just sit back and accept. The world, the way the Forest Service or Ronald Reagan hand it to us. They tell us, oh, you can't have real wilderness in Texas anymore. You can only have this little 14,000 acre addition to the big thick. But the big thicket was 3,000,000 acres. We don't even have 100,000 acres. They tell us we can't have Florida Panthers in East Texas anymore. They tell us we can't have anymore Jaguars down in the South Texas brush country. They tell us we can't have grizzly bears out in the Davis Mountains. They say we can never hear. The whole of the world you can if you can take that step, that step of recognizing that everything does have inherent value. If you can get back in touch with the wholeness and the unity of life on the planet. Then you can take another step. That's a step of vision. Too often. We just sit back and accept the. World the way the Forest Service or Ronald Reagan's hand. They tell us, oh, you can't have real wilderness in Texas anymore. You can only have this little 14,000 acre addition to the big thick. But the big ticket was 3,000,000 acres. We don't even have 100,000 acres. They tell us we can't have Florida Panthers in East Texas anymore. They tell us we can't have anymore Jaguars down in the South Texas brush country. They tell us we can't have grizzly bears out in the Davis Mountains. They say we can never hear the howl of the world again in Texas. Will we believe them? Let's quit balloon. Let's dream about Texas the way it was when. The Comanches were here. When that Texas planes were filled with bison and pronghorn and wolves. Let's dream of Texas. When Jaguars used to roll on the outskirts of San Antonio and Austin, let's dream of Texas the way it was. Alive, vibrant community. We don't have to. Accept things the way they're given to us we. Don't have to accept. The forest services tiny little roadless areas. Let's ask for what?

I have.

We really want. Let's not settle for just a few little refuges down in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Let's talk about real wilderness down there. Let's talk about a place where the. Jaguar and the ocelot and the. Jaguar Randy can live. Let's dream. Let's demand to hear the red wolf again in East Texas. Alligators are lonely without the right. World they want them back.

It's up to.

Us to say they ought to be.

It's up to.

Us that say we should have ivory billed woodpeckers back in East Texas even if we have to go to Castro's Cuba and ask him quite politely, if we can have him

to reintroduce in East Texas sometime. It's the only place they still exist. Unless James Jackson has some hidden away. Let's dream. Let's have fish. We're told that the uranium Genie can never be put back in the ground. Why not uranium? Doesn't want to. Be up above the ground running around causing trouble. Being radioactive that wants to. Be in the ground. Let's bring it back there. Let's put the uranium genie. Back in the bottle and cork. It we can do away with it. We can't forget how to spot the atom. All we have to do is dream it. And if we can dream, if we. Can have vision. Then the next step is one of pass. When I went to Washington, DC. I was told to put my heart in a safe deposit box and replace my brain with a pocket calculator. Don't be emotional, you'll lose your credibility. The payment on the line. Since right to my fans, my heart beats with the tug of the full moon. I'm part of this earth. My bones are made out of the mountains. Shouldn't that feel something when I see a chainsaw ripped? And the hardwood forest of East Texas it's ripping into. My guts too, because I'm related to those trees. I see a bulldozer ripped into a mountain in Colorado. It's ripping into me.

Because I'm made.

Out of those same minerals. I feel what's. Happening to them as a man. I'm angry because Mad Men and men and women are destroying life on this planet. Why suddenly be angry? Why suddenly be passionate? Why simply feel something? Damn it. Don't let him take that away from you. I feel sometimes like we should walk around like this because we're only using the right hemisphere of our brain, that calculator. Up there. God use the rest of your brain. Here's your intuition, your feminine. Side feel something, don't just think. Just calculate. Don't just be a numbers machine.

Glad and look.

At the full moon, once in a while, feel what it does to you. Listen to goose music as it flies overhead. Listen to that instead of your radio. Reach their fingers in the dirt and touch it.

Be alive be.

An animal. Don't let those ***** out there in their high rises, and Houston and Dallas take that away from you. Don't let them turn you into machines. They're destroying our world. But don't let them destroy you. Stand up to it. Be alive. Feel something. And if you feel some. If you feel something like fundus cargos dead like James Jackson did, like Christy and Robin did.

You have courage.

It takes courage to stand up to the mad machine today. Takes courage to stand up in Austin, TX. Like Bill Oliver has done so many times and say no more condos, no more shopping malls don't destroy Barton Springs. Leave Zilker Park alone. Preserve the Edwards Aquifer when all around and it's just the rumble and grow. Grow, grow, grow. That takes court. Takes strides to go stand in front of a bulldozer. Takes crates to go to the Forest Service in East Texas and say no, let's leave some of these forests uncut. Takes courage to live right on this planet. The courage is what changes things. It's the courage of Martin Luther King. Saying that he had a dream.

That he had a big and he was willing to go to jail for. To Christ that Henry David Thoreau had in 1848 protesting the Mexican War, refusing to pay his low tax, and he was thrown in. Jail for it, Ralph. Waldo Emerson came to bail him out and said, Henry, what are you doing in there? And Henry said, Ralph, what are you doing out there? Courage to stand up and say the Emperor has no club. Courage to put your body between the machine and the wilderness. Not only the arrogance. Of the human being standing up and saying I'm going to protect something lesser than me, but the courage of becoming one with the wilderness. Of understanding it, of being the wilderness and defense of yourself and self-defense. That's where we need to be.

Folk song outro: There's not a lot of. Awesome love along the Rio Grande and it's even harder to spot the while. The Jagger wonder. And what remains of their domain? Used to fill the shore. Is now a string of pearls that forms a wildlife corridor Rio Grande Valley. Slipping out of beauty. Between 2 cultures. That would tear the heart from you real. Clear and sprayed and drain. Well, we take the time to say the wildness that remain. A river of diversity. The Rio Grande begins. Up in Colorado, forming canyons and Big Bear. Through you, I won Texas deserts. Road runners. Thorn. And at the North Subtropic Forest with globes of Sable palm. Rio de Las Palmas. Damn the Spanish name. Casa de Las Paloma. Where the wild...

A critique of his ideas & actions.



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