

Group is stirred by Foreman's impassioned plea

Dave Foreman, the Wilderness Society's Washington lobbyist who turned radical and formed Earth First!, saluted the Sheep Mountain Alliance (SMA) at its Saturday gathering with an emotional plea for preservation of roadless areas that brought tears to the eyes of many of those in attendance.

While lauding the unusual win in the Sheep Mountain fight, Foreman underlined the temporary nature of the victory and paraphrased Jefferson in calling the price of conservation "eternal vigilance."

Groups like SMA are the real conservation groups, he

stated, not those making compromises in the halls of Congress. "You've got to fight like the dickens for your own turf," he admonished.

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Foreman said that the U.S. Forest Service is the largest manager of roads in the world, with some 350,000 miles of roads under its jurisdiction presently — "enough roads to stretch from here to the moon

and back," he added.

They are also the second largest employer of road engineers in the world. Max Peterson, former head of the Forest Service, Foreman explained, was a road engineer. "You know what road engineers do," he said. "They build roads."

And, according to Foreman, the Forest Service plans to build 580,000 miles of new roads in the next 50 years, 100,000 miles of that in currently roadless areas.

Foreman, who is currently at work on a seven-year research project to identify all the large roadless areas on

public and private land in the U.S. to be published under the title, *The Big Outside*, suggested that SMA hook up the area they want excluded from

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timbering with the large Hermosa Roadless Area to the southeast. "Link up and yell for that," said Foreman.

He tied in this Forest Service push to convert wilder-

ness into areas managed for timber and roads as part of the global destruction of wilderness and biotic diversity.

Foreman noted that some 40 percent of the rainforest in Central America has been cut just since 1960 in order to cut pennies off the price of fast food hamburgers, since many American chains use cheap Central American beef raised on bulldozed rainforest to keep costs low.

Pointing to the fact that the species extinction rate is currently greater than when the dinosaurs died out, Foreman called the loss of wildness a

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major global crisis.

"The victory here is important," he told SMA members. "What you're doing is crucial."

But he noted that beyond stopping the timber sale maybe SMA should be thinking about reclaiming the region for its original inhabitants like grizzly, wolf, and wolverine. "Set your sights high," he suggested. "Look back at the San Juans to see what you're missing and what can be restored."

Forest Service, posited that the forests consisted of only two things, humans and natural resources.

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Pushing that view, in which animals and plants have no value of their own, even further back, Foreman, a history major in college, said that it came from the Puritan idea that they were bringing the

He credited the Forest Service with the same kind of messianic determination to road all roadless areas and turn all wilderness into tree farms.

Citing a "spiritual crisis," Foreman said the root of the problem was our own failed relationship with the continent. "We must learn not how to convert Turtle Island to our needs," he insisted, "but how to adapt ourselves to the land."

He noted that half of the water consumption on the Front Range is to grow lawns in what is really a desert — with only 12 inches of rain a year, the same as Tucson.

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