

Perceptions/working hypotheses concerning the Ancient Forest Movement Felice Pace

Comments in italics by Brock Evans, November 4, 2007

Responses in red font from Felice, Nov.25-Dec 5 2007

- ◆ In/during the AFM the “grassroots” – in this case the forest activists of the NW and N. California - had unprecedented power and influence within the Public Land Protection Movement. This came about primarily because of the two creators and most important leaders of the Movement - Brock Evans and Andy Kerr – and also because key foundation funders made a decision to commit funding over a period of a decade or so to the key grassroots organizations who were carrying forward the struggle. The prominence of the grassroots was reinforced by the Clinton Administration which chose to have grassroots leaders sit with Clinton and Gore in Portland and not the presidents of the big enviro groups.

Brock: *agree re the prominence (thank God) of the “grassroots” within what you call the AFM, which I usually term the “Ancient Forest Wars,” or “Campaign.” Same thing, really, same point. But I have had some other and different, experiences during my career, which may lead me to feel that this was NOT the first time that grassroots had such “unprecedented” power.*

For example, the Alaska Lands Campaign (1975-80), the defeat of the National Timber Supply Act (1970), the Endangered American Wilderness Campaign (1977-78), literally all (in my experience) of my northwest campaigns, from French Pete Creek to Hells Canyon to the North Cascades to the River of No Return... on and on... all were won only by huge and unending applications of grassroots power – and to one degree or another, all were forest struggles, and/or wilderness struggles, mostly against the same basic enemies as we fought against during the height of the Ancient Forest ‘War’ (forgive my military terminology please). Redwoods National Park, 1965-68, Boundary Waters 1973-78, Congaree National Park (SC) 1973-75. And many more. The Forest Management Act Campaign, 1974-76, the Church anti-clearcut legislation, 1971-72, etc.

In each of these and the others not mentioned there was, what I felt at least to be, a wonderful synergy between grassroots leaders and the national lobbyists. We DC lobbyist types here all instinctively knew – at least I know I did – that the root and source of all our power is always in and with the people themselves, or, as I (still) so often say in speeches or conversations: “... we enviros can never match the money and power of the other side in our struggles to rescue the earth... but money is only one kind of power. There is a greater power, and it always trumps the money power: the power of the vote... and that’s us.”

I am not in any way trying to say that the AFC was the first instance of synergy between grassroots and nationals. But I have always thought that it was the first time that so many and so varied a grassroots network actually had the opportunity to actually help lead the campaign including substantial influence on policy and UNPRECEDENTED opportunity to exercise real leadership. You are in a better position to judge whether this is true – which is why I posed it to you.

I think the prime evidence supporting my premise is the Ancient Forest Act itself. Was there ever, in your experience, a process like that – where so many grassroots leaders were part of the

process and were able to influence to that degree the actual language of an Act that actually had a serious chance of passing?

Perhaps for you the distinction between grassroots and nationals – and by extension the conflict, creative or otherwise, between them - has never seemed real or apt because you came out of the grassroots. You never drew the bright line that we in the grassroots forest protection movement drew and you obviously were (and apparently still are) bothered by us drawing this distinction.

In this regard I have a question: I have a perception that the proportion of folks with a grassroots past working as professional environmentalists has decreased dramatically in comparison to the 70s, 80s and even 90s. Am I all wet, right on, or somewhere in between?

Or:

“ We can never win (or lose) a vote just because we may –or may not be – great lobbyists; we win or lose to the degree that ‘our’ people back in the home state or district are willing and able to pressure their representatives.”

Anyhow you get the idea about how I would think about it. In no way do these experiences take away from your point about the strength of groots during that biggest and most hard-fought struggle of all, 1985-95 (the latter year being the Lawless Logging Rider, and my won, and many other’s arrests, you may recall).

I think I am really more than anything else expressing my difference of opinion re that word ‘unprecedented.’ Compared to what? Not, I would assert, to any of the campaigns just mentioned, nor to the many more which could be named

Surely, what the Clintonistas did in putting me and others like me with the president v. putting the president of Audubon (it would probably not have been you if Audubon had been asked to take a seat) was unprecedented... but then so was the Conference itself....

So maybe we can agree that the AFC represented a culmination or high point in the power and influence of the grassroots within the larger Public Lands Conservation Movement. It is my experience that – since that time – the power and influence has decreased and that this is – consciously or unconsciously – the result of the vast increase in influence within the Movement of the large foundations – lead by Pew – with a new philosophy of more direct involvement and directly employing professional enviros.

I still think you have a strong point to make; something different – in all MY experience at least – occurred in the AFC, something that neither I nor any of my DC compadres had ever experienced or even thought much about, before. Probably I’d better speak just for myself, but that’s how it seemed to me. But what was that difference, what were the feelings inside – of anger, betrayal, what? – that caused those who felt that way to express the same feelings you express here?

One thing that comes to mind here is the reticence of the “nationals” to go aggressively after NSO protection. As you know, it took some prodding to get NAS to do the study you mentioned; I remember distinctly that Dan Taylor required considerable convincing. But the point is made by the fact that the petition to list the NSO had to be made by an obscure “group” from Maine

called Green World. I never did find out who Green World was/is; do you know? The same thing happened with the salmon. It appeared to us that the nationals would never take bold steps to use the ESA to protect wild Pacific Salmon. That's why Andy Kerr led a series of meetings, including grassroots leaders and leading scientists, which resulted in the decision to file the first coast-wide petition to list the Coho. I was part of that process and was there in Eugene when the decision was made. In this regard I would also point out that even prior more limited petitions were lead by the grassroots with little to know support from "nationals". The Siskiyou Project's petition to list Illinois River Steelhead is a case in point.

Perhaps the best evidence supporting the appropriateness of g'roots dissatisfaction with the 'nationals' is the meteoric rise of the CBD. I would argue that if the "nationals" (what I'd rather call the environmental establishment because it is not limited to DC based groups and is not static but dynamic over time) had been doing the job to protect species under the ESA CBF would have remained a regional grassroots group and would not have grown into a national power.

I think those of us who were challenging the FS on the ground – not just responding to calls from the nationals to write letters or even to testify – felt that we did not have sufficient support (including resources) from those nationals working on forest issues. We felt that we were laboring without much support.

But the point is perhaps best made by relating to you what Andy Kerr told me (taught me) about working in DC. At lunch or dinner on one of my first lobbying trips Andy told me that he typically spent most of his DC time lobbying the nationals rather than going to the Hill.

Why was this the case? Whether true or not the perception was that the nationals had compromised before and would compromise what we in the grassroots - with our appeals and on-the-ground challenges to the FS – had worked so hard to protect.

I'm not sure where this came from because I was not that involved in the big battles you mention – with the exception of the 84 wilderness bill. In that case we in Cal did not feel resentment because Sieberling convinced us that he and the Committee had done the best they could.

But what about the Alaska Campaign? Were there compromises made there that led to resentment? Was the Tongas, for example, compromised in favor of other more charismatic areas with less development potential? And was the Alaska Grassroots involved in the decisions to make those compromises in a similar fashion, for example, to the g'roots participation in the decision to let some timber sales move forward as the Clintonistas demanded?

Rightly or wrongly, the perception is that the nationals went along to easily with the compromises proposed by the legislators and administrations and did not even think it was important to even consult with the grassroots. I think it very akin to the way women have felt about their husbands and children about their parents in modern times; the bewilderment you and your colleagues felt at the pent up resentment was like what millions of husbands felt when their wives embraced feminism and what parents felt when their children dropped out, grew long hair and took to smoking an illegal weed previously the provenance of mostly-black jazz musicians.

Looking forward to explore and examine more of what you think about all this.

Well I felt and still feel that much of the dissatisfaction with the ‘nationals’ was self-serving and inappropriate; there were unnecessary cheap shots taken by activists (like me) who came out of 60s movements for peace and justice and counterculture. So we were prone to distrust and challenge authority. Still it was not all this. From our perspective in the NW/N.CA we were doing all this work appealing timber sales, etc. but not getting much support from the “nationals” – especially regional and field staff. This did change and Dan Taylor wound up footing the bill for a couple of my first trips to DC. But it still felt like trickle down.

Your thoughts on this have stimulated my thinking. Maybe what I want to focus on should more properly be called the “Forest Protection Movement” as a distinct sub-set of the Public Land Conservation Movement that properly goes back to the Adirondacks, Roosevelt, Muir and Pinchot, etc. I want to investigate how the Forest protection movement fits into the broader environmental movement and what lessons we can draw from that experience/analysis that can help build a more effective environmental movement.

The “Grassroots Forest Protection Movement” I am talking about began with what I have been told is the first appeal of a national forest timber sale filed by Jim Rogers from SW Oregon. The AFC united and networked us and then the model of small, new grassroots groups challenging the FS all over the country spread like wildfire.

Now this is not to denigrate what came before. I knew Gordon Robinson, for example, and about his involvement with the Club and the Monongahela Decision.

I do know that there were many previous battles and that – as you point out – the “grassroots” were critical. I myself worked on the 84 California Wilderness Bill as a grassroots Audubon activist, including actually getting to testify in the Senate just on my own initiative (we had not even met at the time).

Brock, I think my responses have not been well organized so I’ll try to summarize my premise:

After Earth Day the environmental establishment (aka “the nationals”) reaped the rewards (increased membership) of the awakening it inspired. This gave the nationals unprecedented power particularly when they were able to activate the grassroots membership. Much of the resulting increase in staff levels were folks drawn from the grassroots so there was a natural linkage which, however, eroded over time. Through a variety of campaigns and issues much was accomplished (e.g. CWA, NFMA) but what also emerged was this sense within the grassroots leadership that the nationals were going along with too many compromises. When we came to the AFC – invited in by you and (what was that fellows name from TWS?) – we were determined that this would not take place again; if someone was going to compromise it was not going to be anyone representing us.

- ◆ The AFM led precipitously to a national grassroots forest protection movement. This also was not a plan created and implemented by the Public Land Conservation elite but rather – like Earth Day – arose independently in forest after forest and region after region. Young activists and forest lovers who were appalled by what they saw when they went to the public forests were inspired by what the NW/NCa grassroots groups were accomplishing and moved to implement the same model in their forest/region.

Brock: *this certainly was my experience too – the “unprecedented” rise up of so many new forest action groups, at the same time that the ASQs were being escalated obscenely in the Congress, c. 1985-93, my dating. Before that nearly all forest fighters/activists that I know were members of Audubon Chapters or Sierra Club Groups – the ‘Big Nationals’ Grassroots, if you will – certainly the ones we had to, were bound to, listen to most... and who in my experience at least, were, and had been great forest fighters in all the years before 1985... and (re Audubon in Oregon and WA at least), afterwards too. For example, leadership in both the Oregon Cascades, North Cascades, Olympic National Park, and Minam river (OR) – all forest battles, came from those very groups and persons.*

Also you should know – may have been before your time: in my (and the other old timers’) view there already had long been a forest protection movement, led by both grassroots and nationals, working closely together, since 1968 – the year we soundly defeated the national timber industry which lobbied fiercely against the North Cascades and Redwood National park bills. And lost.

Later on that same year (1968), our local groots friends and allies in Montana, then Wyoming, then spreading to other states, mounted what I would call a counterattack against forest practices themselves (e.g., clearcutting), such a campaign being absolutely unheard of nor dreamed of just a few years before, so ingrained was the common wisdom the other way. From that effort came the Bolle Report, the Church Commission, hearings on the Church legislation (1971), the Monongahela lawsuit and backlash (1974-75, the Forest Planning Act, and the Forest Management Act. ALL grassroots driven; I know, because I was responsible for organizing the all-out telephone banks which stopped the National Timber Supply Act in its tracks, and organizing the groots witnesses to come to DC to lobby/testify in 1971, etc. There was always huge consultation/back and forth, every step of the way.

*Maybe we’re getting somewhere now on that “why” question I asked above. Maybe the answer, partially anyway, is to be found in those new groups – rightly appalled at the logging escalation, wrongly (in my opinion) ascribing that damage to, **not** Les Aucoin and Mark Hatfield, or to the heavy pressure of not only the timber industry AND organized labor on them (and the Governor of Oregon... also CA?) You would remember – but, rather (my feeling now and at the time) blaming the national organizations and their DC lobbyists for letting it happen.*

Again, I can affirm that much of the attack on the nationals was not justified. I believe I said so at the time. I felt that Bonnie, for example, was particularly hard on you. I vaguely remember one among many contentious meetings where I stopped a downward spiral and suggested that we all needed to “cut each other a little slack”. But I do feel that much of this is explained by the background of the activists: we’re predominantly counter-culture folks with a big problem with authority and authorities. You were the recipient of much undeserved “feedback” as a result.

By the way I am not absolving myself. I also was (and sometime still am) guilty of self-indulgent attacks that were (are) not wholly justified and which were (are) sometimes delivered with an unnecessary amount of hostility.

Oh I wish we actually had such power to change it ‘all by ourselves’! When we talk on the telephone, I’ll share with you what we tried to do with, and/or against, these politicians, but just failed...while the chainsaws snarled on, to our collective heartbreaks. Until at last we got the injunction, 1989, and – terrible as the backlash was – were (mostly) able to hold on to it as we

regrouped and at last, were able to 'nationalize' the issue – which I always believed was the only way to save it since the OR pro-logging politician were just too powerful. To this day I don't know how much real "grassroots" pressure, in the form of letters, phone calls, personal visits, etc., the new Oregon activists put out on Les and Mark & Pete Defazio or how sustained it was, as it would have had to be... but whatever it was, they never budged. I know the Oregon and WA Auduboners did a lot, but I do not know much about what the newer grassroots groups did in that regard. Would love to get your take on that.

Well most of these folks were busy out there fighting individual timber sales that were cutting not just NSO habitat but even nest groves! And we were dealing with individual NF plans and fire salvage.... On and on. Letter writing was a luxury we could not afford. During much of this time I was unpaid, being supported by my teacher wife, being a househusband who took his kids to FS meetings with crayons and paper, writing appeals at midnight. So I did not write these letters and I doubt that many of my compatriots who were doing the same wrote many letters either.

But I don't think any number of letters would have moved Hatfield. AuCoin may have been movable; he has since recanted many of his previous positions. But it would have taken more than letters. We should have occupied his Oregon – and maybe DC – offices, gotten arrested, forced Oregon voters to take sides..... But this was a time when we had not yet conceived of using those tactics and the "groots" you describe – the chapter members – were not likely to join a sit in at Au Coin's office.

Did I ever tell you that I kept an 1800+ page diary of the AFC, from 1988-95, day by day almost? Sometime I'll be happy to share with you if you'd like to read, the pages of anguish I – and my beleaguered companions here – felt during those terrible years.

That is wonderful! I think YOU are the one who should write the history of the Forest Protection Movement or at least the AFC. This is much needed. Enviro – like most Americans – tend to be ahistorical. But knowledge of history is an advantage – I would say almost essential – to one who wants to be an agent of change. I feel that my interest in getting the historical background – paying attention to history – has given me a leg up on many of those I've opposed (the timber beasts) and is an important – if not essential – tool in an effective activist's toolbox.

- ◆ The creation of American Lands – as a voice for and of the grassroots forest/public lands protection movement - raised the anti[e] on this threat to the environmental establishment. If the grassroots had its own DC organization it would no longer need the nationals and the nationals would no longer be able to appropriate issues and approaches that came out of the grassroots as their own and then collect money around those issues and approaches.

Brock: agree – that the "new" -- my term -- grassroots entities coming along did not feel recognized or represented then in DC, so formed American Lands. Which I applauded, having learned long ago during my early forest campaigns in the PNW that there is nothing quite so effective at saving particular places, including forest places, as a local action group dedicated to doing just that.

But I'm not so sure that any of us felt that this was a "threat." Neither I nor anyone at Audubon did feel that way as I recall. (You may have more complete information).

I welcomed AL as a whole new ally... one that at last, with DC representation which the newer grassroots (hopefully) would trust more, would come to understand that we enviro lobbyists cannot succeed in anything, much less in anything as controversial as public forest logging -- which had such influential pols and huge economic interests pushing to plunder the public forests. I presumed and expected, that AL, with its own DC lobbyists and its outreach, would be able to stimulate much more of that grassroots pressure on 'gettable' pols, so that we could both withstand the Hatfield riders, and maybe even neutralize our Nemises, the OR pols, & Tom Foley, while at the same time increasing our reach nationally -- which, as I said before, and as the whole Ancient Forest Alliance agreed in 1988 -- was the only thing that could truly save our forests: nationalize the issue, as we had nationalized the Grand Canyon dam issue, to save it from the AZ pols, and the Redwoods, to save them from the Rs in the CA delegation.

And AL did do that, didn't they? At least at first?

Agreed for the most part. My experience is that you did respond positively -- as you always have -- to new forces coming on line, new allies, new tools for moving those mountains that you have played a great part in moving. But again, I see you as somewhat unique -- an outlier among the professional enviros -- with a vision that can encompass an expanding circle.

But you did not have to deal with the funding and, at that time, Audubon was not as dependent on the foundation funds as was, for example, TWS. And I am not even claiming that at that point the perception of threat was even conscious.

But I know from direct experience that this was being discussed among the environmental foundations. I remember a conversation with one of the smaller Left Coast foundations at an EGA meeting when Pew had just come in and was beginning to dictate who we would employ in the push for legislation. (Who was that guy they told us to hire?).

- ◆ *The major environmental groups -- and in particular TWS, NAS, SC -- felt threatened by these developments. Foundation funds which once were theirs almost exclusively were now being given to other grassroots groups which were not "professional" and not part of the club. Some of the major foundation movers and shakers -- who had originally supported the grassroots ascendancy -- also became worried. The key was the Movement's inability to come together in a national alliance. The grassroots dominated movement was seen as too chaotic and too difficult to control.*

Brock: *?? See my comments above. I never heard anything about any NAS 'fear' of losing funds because of this. Can't speak for the others, but I would be surprised. Maybe you have some quotes from key national officials that are contrary, but I/we did **not** feel this way.*

The other part that has always puzzled me, and for which you probably have a good answer, is this: again, which grassroots are you talking about? Three of the biggest Nationals in the Ancient Forest Alliance -- National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and NAS -- all had tens of thousands of grassroots members across the whole of timber country. Granted that not all of them felt always completely 'represented' -- Bonnie Phillips comes to mind. But throughout, and

always in my experience (and diary) NAS' NW chapters were the pushers of us all inside the organization nationally (for example pressuring NAS to fund -- which it did) the first landmark scientific study (1985) documenting the demise of the spotted owl, later (1989-93) spending over \$1 million on the volunteer citizen mappers of the Adopt a Forest Project, back here lobbying constantly, holding our national convention in Bellingham to focus on the issue, Peter Berle constantly supporting me, and personally testifying all the way through... actively soliciting articles from me and others for the Magazine, and so on.

I recite these things so that you can know and understand my context, and why I ask that question: "Which grassroots are we talking about here?" Or, if a group of citizens in timber country also happens to be a Group of the Sierra Club or an Audubon chapter, are they not counted as "grassroots"? You allude to your experiences in Marble Mountain Audubon, and I would be the first to agree that different Chapters are different, have different leadership styles, agendas, etc. But my recall is that the stalwarts of, say, Seattle & Portland Audubons, Lane County, Curry County Audubon, etc., for example, were among the finest and most dedicated activists I have ever worked with. And they did NOT seem (at least to me, and/or at least not for long) join in the anger otherwise described by you, and felt out there. Maybe because they did feel represented, I don't know; I do remember countless conference calls with our chapter leaders especially during the worst times of it all, 1988-90.

Well I did about 90 quads in that mapping project as a volunteer – the whole effort was underfunded and there was not much trickle down into the pockets of those who actually did the mapping. But it was a brilliant move! Do you remember when I brought the first composite OG map from that project to DC? I took it to you and you called Jim Lyons immediately. The next day we were in his office with the map.

You see Brock, you knew how to use the groots without abusing us; you always shared the limelight and you brought me to that meeting whereas others would have taken the map but never taken me to the meeting with Lyons.

So by now we should be clear and this is helpful to me: the groots you speak of are the members of the nationals; the groots I speak of are folks who actually challenged timber sales, went to FS meetings, etc. and not the "armchair activists" to use a term I believe Audubon invented. There was some overlap of course but it instructive that those of us who came out of the national's grassroots felt that it was necessary to found independent organizations (like Klamath Forest Alliance) in order to pursue our visions. It was and remains my judgment that there was no space within Audubon for the sort of leadership I wanted to exercise. Even more importantly, I did not see an opportunity to finance the work I wanted to do within Audubon.

- ◆ I see the major East Coast Foundations as one of many examples of eastern establishment interests working to control what happens in the American West. This theme: eastern establishment's struggle to control a chaotic and recalcitrant West is a major theme in the history of the West – see Worster's Rivers of Empire or Powell biography in this regard.

Brock: *Interesting. Certainly, if you have read Bernard DeVoto, you are well familiar with the strenuous efforts (usually very successful) of eastern extractive corporations, including railroads, to 'control what happens in the American West.' That's why so much of the best*

timberland there is trashed now – after it was stolen. Same with so much else. And one way they did it was through their bought politicians... remember this was the era (before 1913) when US Senators were bought, pardon me, elected, by state legislatures... and it was an open scandal how the JP Morgans, etc., bragged about how they owned this or that person.

I suggest that the “eastern establishment” as described by Worster or Powell, may mostly, or entirely, be referring to those companies and their “Barons,” who destroyed so much of our West, from 1870 up to now, although I have not read their books. Correct me if I am wrong: do either of those two say much about actual foundations as we have known them since, say, 1980? Remember, that was about the year that we enviro types first started learning about the interest of real foundations in anything we were doing; not before then.

Perhaps we read the history of the West differently, you and I; but that ‘chaotic recalcitrance’ you refer to was almost always – maybe always, as I have read it – from the extractive interests – stockmen, lumbermen, mining, oil & gas, etc. – and their mostly bought politicians – who railed at “ the wicked federal government’s—especially the ‘East’s’ interference in our (their) wonderful projects.” These were the same exact interests – and those legislature-appointed Senators – who fought so hard against Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot’s efforts to set up the National Forest System in the first place... and it was the two Wyoming Senators who tried unsuccessfully, to push a railroad across Yellowstone National Park, c. 1886, and railed at the “eastern” and “Midwestern” Congressmen who voted against them. Just like Ted Stevens does today!

I well remember De Voto’s article, “The West Against Itself,” wherein he describes just this syndrome, c. 1947.

In other words, given the history the way I have always read it, I’m not sure that it is an apt analogy... except in perhaps the most indirect and symbolic sense, maybe now a bit transformed by the rather ‘new’ politics of today—i.e., the arrival of dedicated environmental interests on the political scene for the first time, beginning in the 1960s, who challenged -- for the first time – the prevailing common wisdom about logging and mining, damns, etc.

I wondered how you would respond to that hypothesis. I am not sure it will hold water but I am going to continue to work on it and I will read that article you cite by DeVoto – I’ve just read his well written history books and not the journalism pieces. Did you ever meet him?

But consider this: the foundations about which I am speaking were founded by some of the very barons you mention above. Was there entry into the environmental mix purely a matter of recognizing that we had a good cause and needed their help? Or was it, in part at least, an attempt to get the genie represented by the ‘unprecedented’ upwelling of popular support emanating from Earth Day back into the bottle, i.e. a response to the threat of a MOVEMENT which threatened to shatter established lines of authority and alignments of power.

I capitalize movement above because true movements are by nature chaotic and dangerous to established interests and loci of power. And those power centers almost always react by trying to impose (essential but not total) control in one manner or another. Financial dependence is arguably among the most effective of control tools.

- ◆ It was the very chaos (anarchy model of free association) of the AFM that gave it much of its effectiveness. In essence you had a collection of very competent, energetic and motivated activists/organizations which engaged in a friendly but fierce competition. Whether it was who could set the best lawsuit precedent, who could get the foundation money or who could get out the press release fastest and thus get the newspaper quote, the grassroots and nationals knew they were in competition at the same time they were in alliance. This healthy competition led to creativity, boldness and a lot of hard work. I believe this creative tension and competition is largely responsible for our effectiveness.

As an aside, I found it comic that “Biodiversity” now tests as a very effective term with the public. As one of the people who championed biodiversity protection/restoration as an objective of the PLM and as a public rallying cry, I remember that the pollsters/consultants – whom the foundations insisted we listen to - told us back then that it would not work (I believe it was Surdna that funded the focus groups). I felt at the time that these folks had no place in our efforts because they were in the business of figuring out where the public stood at that point in time while we were in the business of changing where people were in relationship to the Public Lands. Interestingly I read recently that the politicians are moving away from as much reliance on poles and focus groups precisely because they are a static snapshot in time. In my view real leaders don’t look to public opinion for their direction but act to shape public opinion or to interpret/give back to the People in an organized form what they receive from the People in a disorganized form (This is a paraphrase of Chairman Mao’s instruction to the Red Army’s political cadres).

Brock: *interesting. I have always been very suspicious of pollsters, ‘consultants,’ and focus groups too, and have yet to come across an idea or recommendation or strategy that we volunteers weren’t perfectly capable of coming up with ourselves without spending all that money. E.G., it was we, ourselves, who came up with that phrase “ancient forests,” back in 1988... a magical phrase as it turned out, one that transformed the character of the debate totally away from that faintly pejorative ‘old growth,’ and certainly gained much more media for our cause.*

I shudder to think what some smarty-pants consultants would have said about that one, and then charged us \$50,000 for their “advice!”

I suspect you are the creator of that term. Am I correct? And answer me this: who was it that told us we needed to use these pollsters and consultants? Were they not a tool to channel the chaotic power of the Forest Protection Movement which is to say to control it?

- ◆ At some point (I recon the meeting in SF where we failed to forge a national alliance) the nationals and some major foundations decided they needed to get the genie back in the bottle. Money was, of course, the key. Pew lead the way requiring – as a prerequisite for getting money – a form of organization much different from the entrepreneurial chaos and real anarchy (i.e. voluntary association) of the AFM. The organization was top down and the funds were controlled by the top. If grassroots funds wanted “trickle down” funds they had to behave, i.e. tow the party line defined from the top
- ◆ .

Brock: ?? *Maybe I'm having a Senior Moment, but I remember very clearly the meeting in September 1988, Portland State University, where we all – nationals and every grassroots leader we knew about, from the BC border to Central California (you were there weren't you? There were 125 'delegates,' selected by local leaders from each state), met debated, and argued for 3 days, and finally came up with a three-fold plan:*

- 1. To nationalize this issue; only that, the national attention, would reduce the terrible power of Hatfield & co. over what they claimed were "their" forests, so "let us handle it."*
- 2. Bind ourselves all together, as one Alliance: no longer just fight for this valley or that specific forest-place, but for all of it. All together.*
- 3. To give ourselves a name, from which came "Ancient Forest" a month later.*

So, what San Francisco meeting do you refer to, and when was it and who was there? It may be in my diary, but this seem very important to the points you are making, and I am very interested. It must have been much later than the 1988 meeting, because I know I never even met anyone from Pew until about 1990-91. I vaguely recall I think; but details please.

This was much later in the process – after the West Coast g'root upwelling had spread (Green Mtn Forest watch, the folks in NC and the deep South, etc. were there). You were not there. There had been a prior meeting in DC; I suspect –but don't know for sure – that this was coordinated by ALA with funding from Pew.

In any case, you were not involved and the effort was not a success. On the surface this was because we were too chaotic, too many egos, to many ideological positions (this was the time of "zero cut" and there were those of us who were the "biodiversity freaks" etc.)

- ◆ *This reassertion of eastern money/nationals within the Public Land Protection Movement actually began during the latter part of the AFM when the foundations began dictating to the Movement who we needed to hire, which polls and polsters we had to use and – via those polesters and consultants – what messages would work and therefore would be selected for use. This was seen most clearly in the evolution of American Lands which was more and more a tool of the big foundations, a national group in its own right and not a group truly representing/facilitating the grassroots. It came home to me when Jim O. had to leave my presence for a confidential call about AF strategy; he never did tell me what that call dealt with.*

Brock: *most interesting, and this is new data for me. I'd like to learn more from you.*

I think I've given you more just above but also check out my article about Pew and the current wilderness campaign at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/pace10092004.html>.

Pew really took over in the Roadless Campaign where they made all the decisions on who to hire, strategy and tactics through their hired guns. Grassroots involvement in strategy and tactics were minimal to non-existent yet this is called a grassroots campaign! In my view, this is shades of 1984 – the novel I mean – where, among other things, "ignorance is strength".

- ◆ The current wilderness protection campaigns are an example of the positives and negatives of the post-AFM Public Land Movements top down command and control structure. Because “grassroots” is a potent symbol and value in the Movement, the command and control system is veiled by an overlay grassroots structure. Each state movement has ostensible “grassroots control” via “steering committees.” But in reality strategy is dictated from above by the Pew Wilderness Center and The Wilderness Society. Those who resist (fail to pretend that the grassroots is in control while towing the party line) are purged (as I was from the California Wilderness campaign Steering Committee). The positive in this are the accomplishments – the wilderness bills that have been passed during the Bush Administration. The negative is seen in how these bills have been compromised by the politicians and in the slowness of the wilderness campaigns to reorient strategy in light of changed political landscape, i.e. the take over of Congress by the Dems.

Brock: *you're probably way closer to the current situation than I on this. All I know is that I have met with numerous of terrific 'grassroots' folks in both eastern Oregon and N. Idaho, in just the past 2-3 weeks... and while there some Pew people there, I never got even the slightest hint that Pew was dictating anything. Or – if they were doing so, unbeknownst to me, certainly a possibility, the strategies and tactics I heard about, given the redness of these places, not only made sense to me, but seemed much like what were were doing in the 60s and 70s, before the foundations came along. A time when we were also hugely outnumbered... at least in the Congressional districts where the forests actually were. I'd like to learn more from you re all this.*

I agree that the “low hanging fruit” tactic did make sense during this period for the most part. But the results have been very mixed. In N.Cal for example Thompson took out everything that anyone objected to for any reason. In my view, we should have drawn the line: Mr. Thompson you do not get a free ride to being a wilderness champion; to get that label you need to take some risks, be willing to save this area even if the Blue Ribbon coalition objects.

Have you seen what has happened in Nevada? Mr.Reid's first bill in this round made a small wilderness, gave BLM land to Las Vegas and gave LV the right of way for the pipeline it wants to build to drain groundwater from the North and East of the state. Enviro went along meekly!

But most telling is the fact that the strategy and tactics did not changed when the political situation changed. For example, I am now promoting a NE California Wilderness Bill and working through the Club (Vicki Hoover, et al) to encourage a reevaluation of our wilderness strategy. With the dems in control of Congress, the prospect of a dem administration and the weakness of Doolittle (embroiled in scandal) now is the best shot we will have in NE Cal for many a year. In my view we should tell Thompson if he wants to be an e champion he must introduce this bill and move it after the 2008 election....or maybe it should be Nancy Pelosi....maybe we should go for a stewide bill now.

The point is that to get a reevaluation of strategy and tactics will be a huge uphill fight because strategy and tactics for this campaign are controlled/emanate from the Pew Wilderness Center and the TWS Wilderness Ctr – funded by Pew. There is grassroots window dressing and rhetoric but the reality is that the grassroots has little if any influence – much less control – of strategy

and tactics. And this is where resentment comes from: I resent the fact that I will have to fight long, hard and maybe even dirty to get a reevaluation of current strategy and tactics and of a wilderness movement that is willing to allow politicians to secure the mantle of wilderness champion without paying any price – like choosing us over the Blue Ribbon folks.

- ◆ Another example of how the genie was put back into the bottle – and what is wrong with the Movement – is the role of Earthjustice. EJ is well funded by Pew and – I will argue – does its bidding by controlling litigation and clients. I will give examples drawn from my own experience of how this is done. I will also explore the advantages and disadvantages of a litigation program that is controlled from above; where the gatekeepers are the environmental legal firms which – because they are so dependent on the big foundations – are willing to do their command and control bidding.

Brock: *you may have more details than I. I have long admired EJ and the boldness of some of their lawsuits, especially on the ESA. They were also the ones you may recall who filed for – and got – that injunction on the spotted owl listing, that brought the whole FS west side logging program to a screeching 2.2 Billion bd. foot halt in 1989, and the resulting furious industry/labor backlash. But at least, despite the harshness and brutality of those times, both from getting beat up (emotionally) by timber politicians in Washington, and sometimes physically, by loggers in the PNW, our movement hung on to this toehold, and was able to expand its reach and power from there. That's my take. But again, I'd like to hear & learn more from you re this.*

No Brock, it was Portland Audubon whose name appears on the lawsuit – not EJs. I make that correction for a reason; the lawyers are supposed to represent – not dictate to – the clients.

Andy Stahl more than anyone created that lawsuit and I want to ask him why he later left EJ which I suspect may have to do with politically-motivated compromises. We can discuss this more when we talk. Each EJ firm is somewhat independent but the Seattle office is very controlling of its clients. I recall asking Andy Kerr why ONRC had made a certain decision that seemed counter-intuitive to me. His response was that EJ did not support the alternative action and ONRC could not afford to not take their advice for fear of them refusing to represent ONRC in future cases.

I've checked the annual reports: EJ is now very Pew dependent. If the leaders of the environmental establishment are concerned about overdependence on certain large foundations they are certainly not sharing this concern with grassroots leaders. But I think it is the responsibility of the leaders of the environmental movement to act in such a way that their independence of action is secure. And that requires diversifying the funding base and keeping foundation grants in general and grants from big foundations which are willing to call the shots (like Pew) at a maximum 25% of total funding. I have not yet calculated the percentages over time but I have seen enough to be confident about what I will find.

- ◆ Another hypothesis is that the strong identification of the American Environmental Movement with the Democratic Party is a huge mistake which prevents and will prevent the Movement from achieving what is needed to “Save the Earth”. The Club will be my example.

Brock: *this has long concerned me too, and the Club – at least its top leadership – might be a good example. I don't really know enough about the current stances to really have an informed view of it, however.. When I was serving on the LCV's National Board, c. 1985-2003, we always worried about this, even to the point of creating a different (and considerably lower) rating system to evaluate Rs by, knowing we had to have some of them on the support list, or that charge would stick. I have to say, it got harder and harder during the heyday of the Gingrich years. The political problem was that the R party had shifted so radically to the right and now they were in control, so that everything we loved and cared about was under attack, and we had to have some allies or risk losing everything. Sometimes there seemed no choice but to “dance with the one that brung ya.” That's just the way it was in those terrible years 1995-2006. Even though we organized grassroots like hell everywhere, it was all defensive, and like it or not, Democrats were mostly our saviors. Contrary to what some say, there IS a difference between the parties these days, on our issues at least – a HUGE difference. Some outstanding exceptions, but very few.*

Good points above re “dance with the one who brung ya” but there is a price and there should be clear boundaries and a preserved ability/willingness to disagree or even oppose. In other words, in my view we sell ourselves too cheaply to these new dems. I like Carl Pope but he is the worst in this regard from what I have seen.

What is the downside to this over-identification or over-closeness? Here's an example from the Kerry Campaign. Jim Lyons, Carl, et al had worked very hard to get Kerry to make a statement about forests. It was drafted and scheduled but it never happened. The campaign decided they did not need to do it – it would only alienate some westerners and the enviros would be disappointed but would not/could not extract a price.

My analysis: we sold ourselves to Kerry too cheap – not our endorsement but our “boots on the ground” and we were not willing to exact a price when he did not take care of us. Thus we are taken for granted and are given only what the politicians must pay no price for. Under these circumstances, the victories you/we won over overwhelming odds would not have happened. But more importantly I do not believe that we can “Save the Earth” with this sort of “Movement”.

I would appreciate hearing your take on the Congressional “environmental champions” of today v those of the past. My guess is that Phil Burton would not have gone along with such a timid approach to wilderness designation even if he were in the minority. Unlike Thompson, I suspect Burton would have told the Blue Ribbon Coalition to go take a hike on the NW Cal Wild Bill! What do you think?

- ◆ A symptom of overdependence on big foundation funds – and the influence/control that gives these foundations – is that all the “majors” must present themselves as working on and being critical too a few high profile issues. This will be illustrated by the announcement by Flicker in Audubon Mag that Audubon had led the effort to protect the roadless areas. As you know A. did very little; they did serve as the fiscal agent. I'll use the Arctic as an example and ask how much more public land could have been defended (from Bush energy development) if the groups would have spread rather than concentrate their efforts.

Brock: *I also believe that there is an overdependence as you say, and it's not good for the movement. But as to the specific Arctic Refuge example, I'm not so sure that's the best example, because it is so precious a place. I don't know the answer to it all, but I do know (1) that the Arctic Refuge is a magnificent place – from my travels throughout Alaska, the most spectacular, scenic, wildlife rich, biodiverse part of our country's whole Arctic. And (2), likely, the one with the most oil, else the companies, their labor allies, and all the Alaska politicians, wouldn't have attacked it so fiercely over so many years, in assault after assault.*

Politically, if they had won – beat us – on this one, a dreadful message would have been sent: “that even the enviros, with all their [alleged, but nowhere a fraction of that of the oil boys] money and grassroots couldn't save it, then everything else would be that much easier to grab...”

I'd be very interested to see your figures on what places the Bush people leased out or otherwise developed that could have been prevented if our community hadn't spent so much effort in defending this Wildlife Refuge, established in 1960. And since most of the bad leasing was done in states like Wyoming, Utah (we did stop the worst of it along the Rocky Mountain Front in Montana), I'd be interested in the strategies to reverse the politics in those states and their delegations so as to save more.

I would be especially interested in this analysis because I too have been distressed at the other losses, while thanking Providence or whatever is there, that we were, somehow, able to hang onto the Wildlife Refuge in absolutely its darkest hour, December 2005.

Say the whole community spent, oh about \$ 2 million in 2005 to save the Refuge; that's probably approximately what it was, I've heard. (I'm sure the oil companies, the Teamsters, the State of Alaska, and many big R donors spent huge amounts more). A good question for analysis might be: what if that whole \$2 million were not spent in Alaska, but, say, in Utah and/or Wyoming? Or New Mexico, another ravaged place. Alaska would probably have been lost, but what leases, where, could have been prevented? And from where would have come the political support to do so, given the R politics of the Congress, the R delegations of each state, and the Bush Administration? How could that \$2 million be better spent to stop which leases where, in which place? (Timber sales too?)

Or, spread out that \$ 2 million some more, even \$3 million – I'm just guessing: what places, where specifically, might have been saved? And, in your opinion, would or would not the Arctic Refuge have been lost, opened up to oil exploration? I don't really know the answers; actually I've never really considered the problem as you pose it here, which is why I'd be most interested in your or any other 'apples and apples' analysis.

Again, you make very good points here and that is very helpful to me in clarifying my analysis. I am not saying the Arctic should not have been the focus. Rather it should have been framed within the larger context and the grassroots should have been mobilized to fight all or many of the outrages – not just the Arctic. We should have used the Arctic to educate the American People about the deeper issue of the connection between big oil and big government. We should have sought and spent more funds on organizers in Wyoming where the ranchers are against the drilling, for example, and where we could make longer term gains through an expanded base.

I don't know but suspect that you are vastly underestimating the amount of \$ spent on "Tongas Defense" My guess is that it is in the double digit millions.

Consider an alternative in the model of the AFC. Pulling together energy and public land activists from around the country; agreeing to prioritize the Arctic as a flagship but using that flagship to help the defensive efforts around the country. And a true Alliance rather than top down/trickle down where an "activist" is someone who writes a letter or signs an e-form. While clicking that web-form button is an "act" in my view an 'activist' is someone who makes more of a commitment of time and focus.

Whew! I hadn't really intended to write so much, Felice. But your questions and observations were so interesting that my responses just tumbled out. We have agreed before that we would mostly talk over the telephone about these things, because there are as many nuances as there are personalities, which cannot easily be expressed in writing.

But if you may at some time like to quote what I have said here, that's OK with me – with one caveat, and one request: that my remarks not be taken out of their larger context, as I have expressed them; and that you ask me first about any quotes you might later wish to use.

*Thanks, and thanks for giving this history and its impact so much powerful thought. **Brock***

11/4/07

Brock, I must confess to not wanting to discuss these things over the phone. I confess to phone phobia – a bad affliction in an activist. I really want to sit down with you and a good bottle of wine or whatever you prefer to drink and bat these ideas and readings of our history around a bit more. I will be coming to DC before too long – probably in late January or early February - and will try to coordinate with your travel schedule so we can have some time to talk in person. What is your schedule like in the second ½ of January?

Also, maybe I can figure out a way to get you out to speak in N. Cal one of these days: what is the deal on that? Are you out there speaking on behalf of Defenders/ESA Coalition or on your own? What is your speaking fee, etc.? What do you like to speak on?

In the meantime, perhaps you'd be interesting in continuing this back and forth conversation over the internet which would create a very interesting record. Let me know. And, as for quotes or attribution of ideas, etc., if I were to want to use any quotes or attributions from you I would get your approval first. Same for others.