

The following timeline is only a partial indication of the number of actions and campaigns that took place under the EF! banner

1980-1984

EF!J Headline: *Kalmiopsis Wilderness Blockade Assaulted by Bulldozer, Foreman Run Down by Truck*
Action would result in the halting of Bald Mt. Road

700 Arrested in Australia, including member of Parliament, protecting Tasmania Rainforest

March 20: Cracking of the Glen Canyon Dam

EF!J Conceived

Earth First! Roadshow: 40 venues in 3 months

1980

1981

1982

1983

1984

Blockade Saves Sally Bell Grove in Sinkyone (Humboldt/Medocino)

July 4th w/ EF!: "Wilderness is America. What can be more patriotic than the love of the land?" -Dave Foreman

July 10-12: EF!ers occupy Montana Senator Melcher's office to protest Wilderness Act of 1984

In background: EF!ers lock down to gates of access road to Mount Graham

During the first period of Earth First!'s existence, it was a loosely bound gaggle of self-styled troublemakers, disenchanted environmentalists calling themselves radicals who would put the Earth first. They were conservationists, anarchists, eco-feminists, deep ecologists, artists, pagans, misanthropes and white collar businessmen. Well, maybe not white collar businessmen, but there were some pretty high class herbatologists skulking around the periphery of the camp fire. The first known action occurred in the Gila National Forest, with bandana-clad ruffians erecting a monument to the Apache chief, Victorio, who raided a nearby mining camp in 1880. The monument read:

Victorio

Outstanding Preservationist and Great American

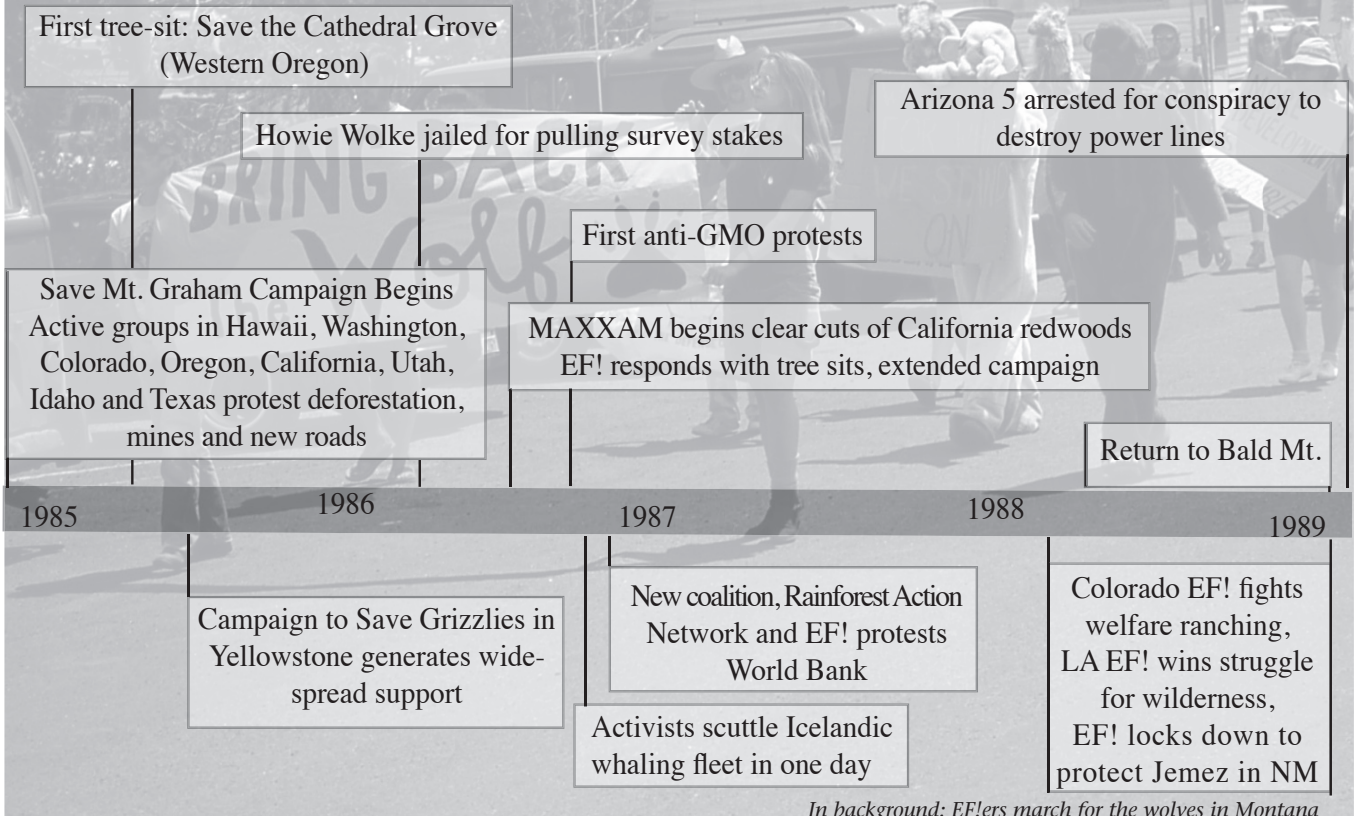
This monument celebrates the 100th anniversary of the great Apache chief Victorio's raid on the Cooney mining camp near Mogollon, New Mexico, on April 12, 1880. Victorio strove to protect these mountains from mining and other destructive activities of the white race. The present Gila Wilderness is partly a fruit of his efforts.
— By The New Mexico Patriotic Heratige [sic] Society

Actions to follow would build on this brazen critique of industrial civilization. A roadshow starring EF! co-founders, Dave Foreman, Bart Koeler and Howie Wolke, criss-crossed the US in three months, spreading fire and brimstone (and environmental awareness, too!). In 1981, the Dam Crackers unfurled a long, black-plastic sliver down the front of the Glen Canyon Dam resembling a huge crack as eager on-lookers listened to Ed Abbey give a stirring convocation on protecting wilderness.

Symbolic actions soon moved to direct interventions. The EF! Australia campaign to save the Tasmanian rainforest became international news, while impassioned campaigns commenced in Oregon's Kalmiopsis Wilderness and the Sinkyone of Northern California. EF!ers blockaded roads successfully in both places, halting deforestation in roadless areas identified by the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). It wasn't long before occupations would enter the mix.

EF!ers had a sound knowledge of environmental policy, and in 1984, they took their No Compromise! critique to the office of Montana Senator Melcher. Having pressed for the Wilderness Act of 1984, which threatened to condemn acres of roadless areas to deforestation, Melcher found activists occupying his office, sitting in his chair, and refusing to leave.

1985-1989



In background: EF!ers march for the wolves in Montana

Background photos courtesy of EF! Journal Archives

The second half of the 1980s saw the vast expansion of James Watts' slash and burn forestry policies, and Earth First!'s swash-buckling actions along with it. As rapacious timber companies were allowed by the Federal Government to pillage every road-less area available—even designated wilderness areas in some cases—EF! came out of the woodwork to sab the bastards.

While EF! grew, the culture and ideas of the founders flourished, and in some cases floundered. Articles by Dave Foreman, including *Rehabitation*, *Biocentricism* and *Self Defense* set an encouraging tone for the movement, brought to an extreme by the polarizing article, *Earth First! No Wimps. Love Your Mother, Don't Become One*, by Dana Lyons, was also met with controversy.

In the meantime, the movement was starting to grow beyond wilderness defense. Anti-GMO protests, species protection and hunt sabs started to pull EF! in many directions. Offshoots like the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) sprung forth.

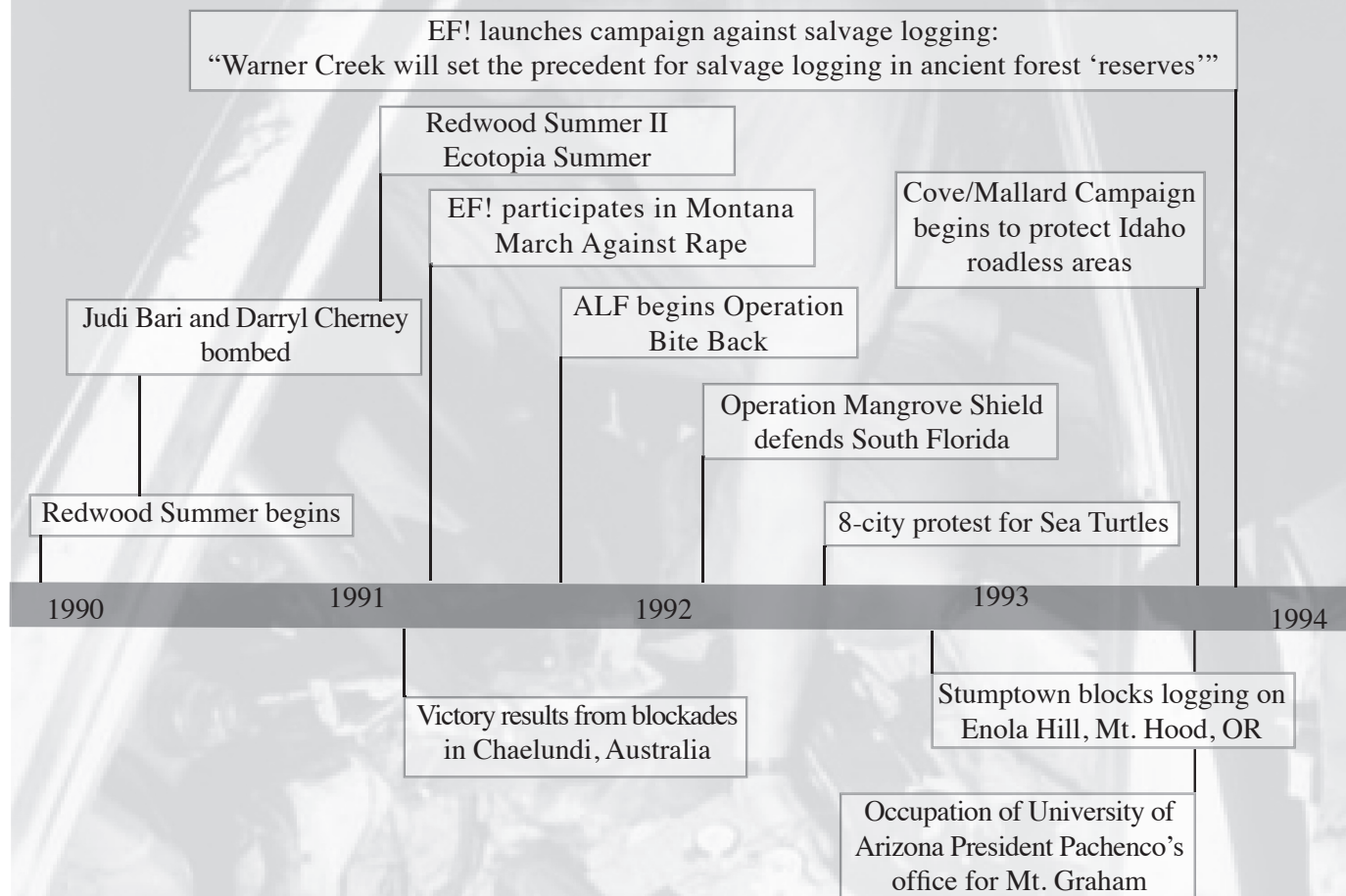
As EF! began spreading out, its founders became targets of increasing government investigation. Howie Wolke was arrested for pulling up survey stakes, and two years later, as he felt the reigns of the movement sliding from his hands, Foreman was arrested along with four other activists for alleged involvement in a plot to destroy power lines.



Action Close-up
Photo courtesy of Karen Peckert

"We protested tests of 'ice-minus' sprayed on strawberry crops to make them resistant to freezing. Our guerrilla theater included a big fat strawberry, a mad scientist and others. Meanwhile, under cover of darkness, the strawberry plants were pulled." — KP

1990-1994



Never before had the environmental movement suffered such an onslaught of bad news: By 1989, people were fighting tooth and nail over control of the *Journal*, an FBI infiltrator had implicated five EF!ers (see page 16), and then Ed Abbey died. The movement was expanding to include more social change issues, and greater diversity of activists. The nationwide call for people to come to California and participate in a mass civil disobedience campaign called Redwood Summer took EF! organizing to a new level and visibility, but heated things up in the redwoods, and raised controversy over the campaign's stance opposing property damage during the civil disobedience campaign. The organizer many looked to for leadership, Judi Bari, was building alliances with loggers and mill workers, mounting a sophisticated class analysis heretofore not present in Earth First! Bari, stood up for the loggers against the timber companies while also drawing ecofeminist anti-racist connections. Redwood Summer, drawing on the strategy of civil disobedience used during the civil rights movement's Mississippi Summer, mobilized over three thousand activists before tragedy struck.

In 1990, Judi Bari's car was bombed, nearly killing her. The bombing, and the subsequent FBI efforts to discredit Bari and her partner Darryl Cherney in the media, sent shockwaves through the movement. It was the latest in the FBI and Department of Justice's efforts to link EF! with explosives and violence and portray the movement as terrorist, thus disempowering it. EF! mourned collectively, and then fought back harder than ever. By 1995, three free states had set up barricades, Redwood Summers continued and EF!'s numbers grew.

On a wing and a prayer (and an old schoolbus belonging to a former life insurance agent inspired by Redwood Summer), the Cove/Mallard campaign blocked the deforestation of pristine wilderness in Idaho, sticking a wedge in the Forest Service's campaign to destroy roadless areas.

In 1995, the Salvage Rider was passed by Clinton, allowing wilderness areas to be cut "for their own good." When authorities claimed that an arson set in a beautiful area of the Willamette Forest called Warner Creek provided just cause to protect the forest from further fires through "salvage logging," Earth First! stopped them.

In background: Judi Bari's car after a bomb injured her and passenger, Darryl Cherney

1995-1999

Woody Harrelson
climbs Golden Gate
Bridge for Redwoods

Rally for Headwaters Forest
brings 8,000 people to the
redwoods, including Mickey
Hart and Bonnie Raitt

WTO meeting shut
down in Seattle

ELF torches Vail Ski
Resort

"Sugarloaf falls to the saws,"
Warner Creek Digs in,
Ward Valley begins

First ELF action:
Oregon McDonald's
locks glued, walls
spraypainted, "ELF"

Wild Rockies EF!
lockdown protects
Montana wilderness

First Minnesota blockade
by Big Woods EF!

Minehaha Free
State begins

I-69 Resistance
Begins

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

UK Reclaim the Streets
smashes cars, holds Street
Carnival

Goolengook blockade begins in Australia

RAN: Mitsubishi Boycott
Strikes

Trees spiked in
Gabon, Africa

Ruckus Society founded

UK GMO scythings

In background: Warner Creek Blockade (top), Headwaters Rally (bottom)

The repression did not die down as the millennium ticked away, nor did it stop Earth First!. EF! simply would not back down—lock downs and free states sprang up while "treesit" became a household word.

The Warner Creek Free State stood successfully blocking logging for years until authorities backed off. Cove/Mallard had also declared victory by the end of the '90s, and a new campaign began to protect the wild against a nuclear dump in Ward Valley, Southern California. An anti-roads free state opened in Minnesota, resistance to I-69 started in the Mid-West, and militant direct action by the new Earth Liberation Front (ELF) cost industry millions.

Projects like the Buffalo Field Campaign, which came out of Earth First! campaigns and groups, helped build the movement, but the ideological split around using property destruction along with civil disobedience reached a new height of intensity with the dramatic actions of the ELF. Caught in the maelstrom was the Earth First! Journal, trying to moderate the debate.". Caught in the maelstrom was the *Earth First! Journal*, which many felt had begun to accept property destruction as an acceptable Earth First! tactic.

Still, the momentum from the 90s carried over into the millennium with many EF!ers taking part in the Battle in Seattle.



Action Close-up
Photo courtesy of Karen Pickett

Demo at DuPont plant in Antioch, CA, 1992: "People painted their faces so they were melanoma-stricken, we wore hazard suits, brought 55 gallon drums of toxics that doubled as drums to beat on, and staged a die-in. All those people out in the streets with skin cancer yielded a lot of press coverage." — KP

2000-2004

The Fall Creek Treesit starts in 1998, continues for 6 years, ends in victory

Eagle Creek
Treesit raided, Tre
Arrow begins 11
day occupation on
ledge of Forest
Service building

Santa Cruz EF! defends
ancient redwoods

Wild Rockies EF! blocks
Boise-Cascade in Idaho

Hock-Hocking
EF! stages first
Ohio treesit

Gypsy Mountain Treesit defends Humboldt
redwoods for two years

Chuk'shon EF! mountain
lion hunt sabotage

WREF! defends Bitterroot
Wilderness in Montana

Katuah EF! Protests KKK
in South Carolina

Katuah EF!
confronts
MTR

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

Jeff "Free" Luers
sentenced to 23 years
for burning SUVs

EF! wins historic
legal victory:
Bari, Cherney vs. FBI

Congressional Hearing
on Ecoterrorism

The beginning of the new millennium heralded an era of challenges and great expectations for Earth First!. A young, dynamic movement with vast public support, EF! engaged in campaigns with community support from Minnesota to Arizona, Cascadia to Appalachia. After the victory in Cove/Mallard, Wild Rockies wilderness became a stronghold of radical environmentalism, while EF! tactics and veterans were credited with much of the success of the WTO shutdown in Seattle, 1999.

Campaigns in Cascadia broke through the frontlines of environmental struggle with the new Fall Creek Treesit. Started by two individuals, Fall Creek evolved into a six-year-long test of EF!'s will, tactics of nonviolence and strategy of free states. Meanwhile, the Minnehaha Free State in Minneapolis forced a highway rerouting project to spare threatened headwaters through nonviolent lockdowns and solidarity with indigenous peoples.

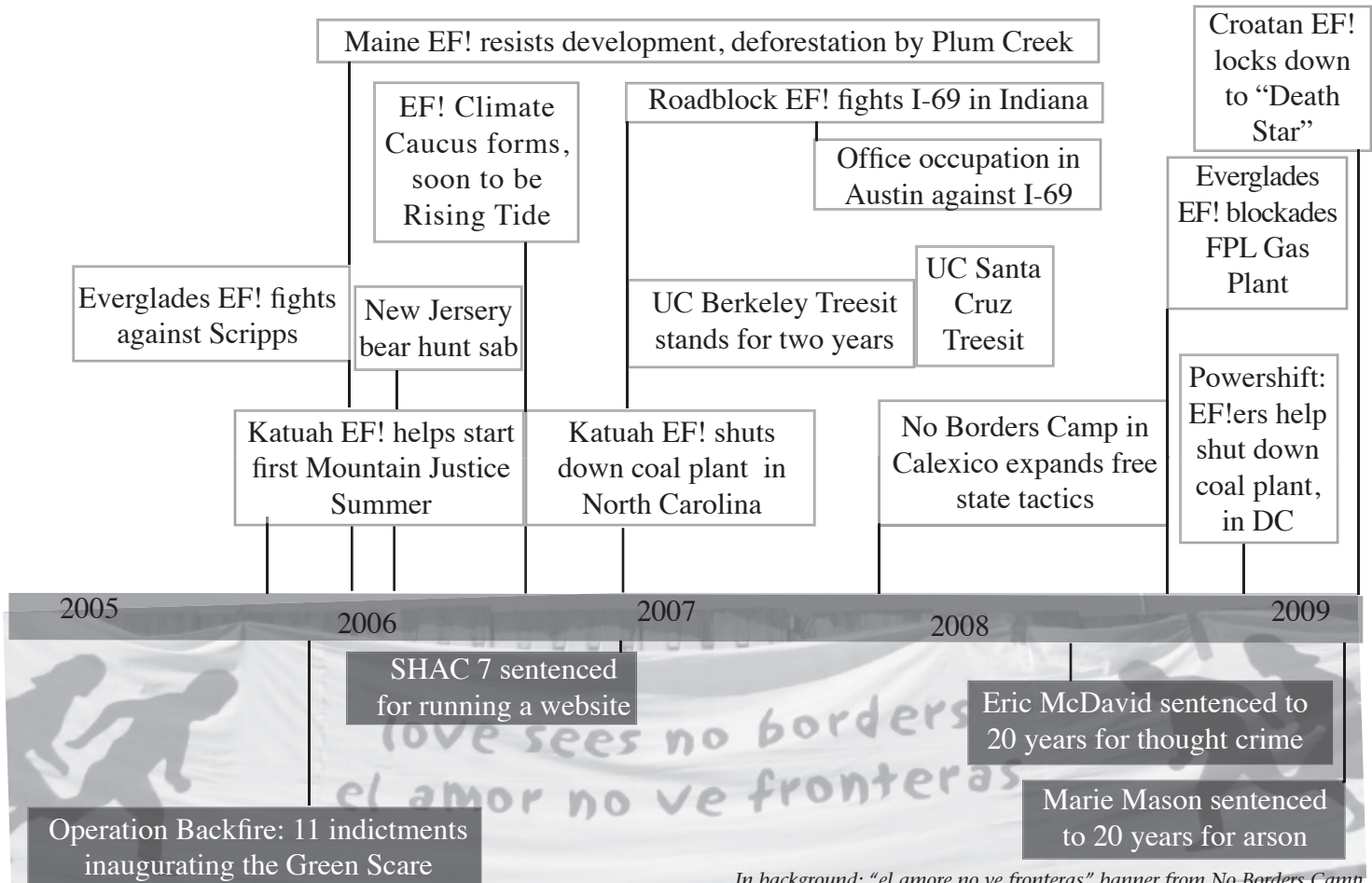
As Earth First! continued to struggle against deforestation and environmental destruction everywhere through treesits, lockdowns and road blockades, activists began gathering support for lawsuits that flipped attention to the police tactics of pepper spray and pain compliance holds. The state fought back harder than ever.

Using the escalation of tactics by the ELF to attack Earth First!, the US government launched a full-scale campaign of surveillance and repression against "domestic terrorism" after September 11, 2001. Increasing the sentencing for sabotage done in defense of the Earth and the harassing of activists, the US started using Grand Juries regularly for the first time in its attempts to repress the radical environmental movement. Using the heightened pressure to coerce testimonies from activists, the government zeroed in on individuals who had been turned in by their peers, sentencing them to extreme prison sentences for minor acts of arson.

In spite of EF!'s constant pressure to defend itself against allegations of terrorism, energetic campaigns to defend wilderness maintained steam in Montana and Idaho, while EF! groups in Appalachia began to establish an anti-oppression critique in the midst of the inception of mountaintop removal (MTR)—arguably the most environmentally destructive practice taking place in the US today. In a highlight, Judi Bari finally won a lawsuit against the FBI, albeit posthumously, showing how the FBI had indeed violated the First and Fourth Amendment Rights of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney by blaming the activists for the car-bombing that almost took their lives in attempts to discredit EF!.

We apologize if you have any complaints that your group wasn't accurately or fully represented in this timeline.

2005-2009



With the arrival of MTR came the dawning of a new era of resistance. Mountain Justice Summer was formed by members of Katuah EF!, and the Earth First! Climate Caucus evolved into Rising Tide North America, marking new reference points for climate change activists, environmental justice activists and conservationists.

NAFTA and other Free Trade Agreements had generated an idea of open borders that allowed economic exploitation to usurp human rights and environmental protection, bringing activists to defy new infrastructure plans and programs to increase manufacturing and industry.

As groups in Florida, Indiana, Texas and North Carolina began to emerge onto the new tableau of anti-infrastructure, anti-industry actions with daring imagination and powerful ideas, the FBI initiated the Green Scare, a sweeping escalation of indictments, surveillance and repression which resulted in lengthy sentences for important activists implicated in ELF actions by informants.

In spite of intense oppression, campaigns to protect old trees on the college campuses of Berkeley and Santa Cruz proved that treesits still gathered broad-based public support, while daring blockades against Florida Power and Light and the coal company AEP showed that EF!'s younger generation was carrying the torch with pride and bravery.



"Grand Dammes Treesit": three women over 80

Berkeley Treesit, 2007: "The Save the Oaks campaign was an urban tree sit that lasted two years, activated the student population of UC Berkeley and involved everyone from University faculty to city council people to elementary school classes to many Native Americans to People's Park residents but was branded as an Earth First! campaign." — KP

Action Close-up
Photo courtesy of Karen Pickett