

The monkey wrench gang essay sample

[Environment](#)



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Abstract

Edward Abbey, the American author of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is noted for his advocacy of environmental issues and criticism of public land policies. His best-known works include the novel, which has been cited as an inspiration by radical environmental groups. And he is the main member to form the environmental group known as “ Earth First” which primarily associated with direct action to prevent logging, building of dams, and other forms of development that may cause destruction of wildlife habitats or the despoliation of wild places.

“ The monkey wrench gang”

The Monkey Wrench Gang , a novel, written by Edward Abbey (1927–1989), published in 1975. It is the story about a group of 4 environmental who fight the over-development of the 1970’s American West. The summary of the plot is that Ex-Green Beret George Hayduke, a rather eccentric person has returned from war to find his beloved southwestern desert threatened by industrial development. Joining with Bronx exile and feminist saboteur Bonnie Abzug, wilderness guide and outcast Mormon Seldom Seen Smith, and libertarian billboard torcher Doc Sarvis, M. D.,

Hayduke is ready to fight the power—taking on the strip miners, clear-cutters, and the highway, dam, and bridge builders who are threatening the natural habitat. Together, though not always working as a tightly knit team, they form the titular group dedicated to the destruction of what they see as the system that pollutes and destroys their environs. As their attacks on deserted bulldozers and trains continue, the law closes in.

These four members Gang see the ‘ enemy’ as those who would develop the American Southwest: befouling the air, despoiling the land, and destroying Nature and the sacred purity of Abbey’s desert world. The greatest hatred is focused on the monolithic edifice of concrete Glen Canyon Dam, that dams a beautiful, wild river, and which the monkey wrencher gang seeks to destroy. Indeed, one of the book’s most memorable scenes is that of Abbey’s character Seldom Seen Smith, as he kneels atop the dam praying for a “ precision earthquake” to remove the “ temporary plug” of the Colorado River.

An informed public must act deliberately, rationally and collectively in defense of the Earth. The tactics of the Earth Liberation Front can only provoke an angry public to turn on those who, through terrorist sabotage of property and endangerment of life, appoint themselves as “ uncompromising defenders of the Earth.” As a result, both democratic institutions and the Earth will be lost to humanity.

The first half of the 1980s saw psychology coming in by investigating into the subject of environmental awareness and personal attitudes towards environmental issues and thus developing a subject known as environmental sociology, which is the study of the reciprocal interactions between the physical environment, social organization, and social behavior. Protecting the environment is the main aim for any organizations and here we discuss about the two most important environmental organizations.

Organizational strategies or tactics of Green Peace:

Green peace can have a significant impact in shaping world environmental policies, as one of the most prominent international environmental

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movement organizations. This is due to several significant strategies Green peace has utilized in pursuing its goals. One strategy is civil disobedience against environmental deteriorations. Civil disobedience is a public, non-violent and reliable act against the law, usually done with the intent to bring a change in the policies or law of the government.

For example, this strategy is used in the phenomenon of the seagoing non-violent confrontation in Canada and France by sailing the Rainbow Warrior ship into the nuclear testing sites. Basically, this policy was applied by Green peace to gain media coverage and international support in order to avoid various forms of environmental degradation.

However, the strategy of civil disobedience has changed, especially in the 1990s after Green peace was well-established and had gained worldwide recognition. Recently, Green peace has applied more moderate policies in pursuing its purposes, such as attracting more passive financial supporters, taking the role as a lobbyist in both domestic and international decision-making processes and providing scientific environmental reports.

Earth first:

Earth First! (EF) was founded in 1980 in the Arizona desert to protect the environment against the predations of corporate and commercial interests. EF's debut took place on March 21, 1981, when activists unfurled a jagged 300-foot-long sheet of black polyurethane against the face of the Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona. Shaped like a giant crack, the sheet was meant to convey EF's desire to see the dam destroyed. Edward Abbey was in attendance that day and reportedly shouted, "Earth First!" – and the name <https://assignbuster.com/the-monkey-wrench-gang-essay-sample/>

stuck. The group's slogan thereafter became “ No compromise in defense of Mother Earth!”

The animating principles that drove EF were initially fleshed out at annual retreats held in Wyoming. There, as well as in the pages of the newly created *Earth First! Journal*, the EF faithful announced their mission to set aside for preservation 44 million acres of wilderness across the United States. Toward that end, EF pledged to engage in “ ecotage,” the commission of illegal and anonymous acts of sabotage.

The organization's tactics and objectives were heavily influenced by the book *Ecodefense : A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*. Authored by EF co-founder Dave Foreman, this publication provided instruction for downing power lines, trashing heavy machinery and equipment, and otherwise interfering with the work of land developers and loggers. Earth First! literature is sprinkled with the word “ monkeywrenching” – its euphemism for direct action. As explained by *Earth First! Journal* , the act of throwing a monkey wrench into a complex social mechanism is “ a means of striking at the Earth's destroyers at the point where they commit their crimes.”

Among the strategies pioneered by EF to impede logging was tree-sitting, where an EF! volunteer would camp out on the branch of a tree slated for cutting—sometimes for several days—while EFers on the ground brought supplies and carried away garbage. The idea was that loggers would avoid trees thus occupied. EF member Julia “ Butterfly” Hill holds the record for the longest tree-sit to date; between 1997 and 1999, she spent 728 days in the crown of a 180-foot-tall California Redwood tree in order to save it from the

saws of the Pacific Lumber Company.

Another favorite tactic of EF was to camp out on logging roads, thus obstructing vehicle access to cutting sites. EF activists would also pile branches, rocks, and felled trees across the roads as improvised barricades.

Green peace and Earth first.

Unlike Greenpeace, Earth First! (EF!) is not an incorporated nonprofit. It has no board of directors or officeholders who take responsibility for its actions. Indeed, it has no formal leadership, preferring to think of itself as “ a movement” rather than an organization According to EF! “ *Monkey wrenching is a step beyond civil disobedience. It is nonviolent, aimed only at inanimate objects, and at the pocketbooks of the industrial despoilers. It is the final step in the defense of the wild, the deliberate action taken by the Earth defender when all other measures have failed, the process whereby the wilderness defender becomes the wilderness acting in self-defense.*”

Distinguished author, activist, and ecologist Kirkpatrick Sale discusses the development and current trajectory of the environmental movement. Green revolution is a term coined by U. S. Agency for International Development director William Gaud (March 1968).

The Green Revolution, book written by Kirkpatrick Sale, Eric Foner (Editor) says that ‘ The green revolution is a powerful history that should empower present-day environmentalists to fight the good fight. It makes it clear that the major battles for life on earth are yet to be fought, and must be won.

One way of analyzing the extreme discord between the world-views of primitive and earth-based societies and of civilization is that of biocentric vs. anthropocentric outlooks. Biocentrism is a perspective that centers and connects us to the earth and the complex web of life, while anthropocentrism, the dominant world view of western culture, places our primary focus on human society, to the exclusion of the rest of life. A biocentric view does not reject human society, but does move it out of the status of superiority and puts it into balance with all other life forces.

It places a priority on a bioregional outlook, one that is deeply connected to the plants, animals, insects, climate, geographic features, and spirit of the place we inhabit. There is no split between ourselves and our environment, so there can be no objectification or otherness to life. Where separation and objectification are at the base of our ability to dominate and control, interconnectedness is a prerequisite for deep nurturing, care, and understanding. Green anarchy strives to move beyond human-centered ideas and decisions into a humble respect for all life and the dynamics of the ecosystems that sustain us.

Environmental movement organizations (EMOs) that have similar goals frequently rely on different tactics and strategies to advance their agendas. The main aim for every person on this planet is to protect this earth. By observing the two environmental organizations we can conclude that we need to follow some rules like to overcome number one threat facing our planet: climate change, to defend our oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves, to work for disarmament and peace by reducing dependence on finite

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resources and calling for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, to create a toxic free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in today's products and manufacturing etc...

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