

Further Encounters with the Archdruid

Two new biographies explore the life and times of Sierra Club icon David Brower

BY LEON KOLANKIEWICZ

January, 1954: It was a moment of high political drama in Washington, D.C., as well as a pivotal incident in the awakening of the modern conservation and environmental movements in the United States of America.

The House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation was holding two weeks of hearings on the proposed construction of two huge dams at Echo Park and Split Mountain, near the confluence of the wild, untamed Green and Yampa rivers in isolated Dinosaur National Monument, in the remote reaches of western Colorado. The Green and the Yampa are both tributaries of the Colorado River, the main hydrological artery in the arid American Southwest and sculptor of the legendary Grand Canyon in northern Arizona. Berkeley, California born-and-bred David Brower, the recently appointed, first-ever executive director of the San Francisco-based Sierra Club, had given testimony the afternoon before. Brower — neither a civil engineer nor a hydrologist (nor even a college graduate for that matter) — had had the audacity to question the estimates of evaporation rates in the proposed reservoirs calculated by civil engineers at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Now the subcommittee had provided Brower with a blackboard and chalk so that he could clarify for them his own alternative calculations.

The Bureau of Reclamation's Cecil Jacobson, of the Bureau's Denver office, had been beckoned to refute Brower's claim that his agency's legions of engineering experts had erred.

"Are you an engineer?" asked Representative Arthur Miller of Nebraska.

"No, sir, I am an editor," replied Brower, adding that he was using ninth-grade math.

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"You are a layman, and you are making that charge against the Bureau of Reclamation?" asked Representative Wayne Aspinall [D-CO].

Added Representative William Dawson from Utah: "There are some 10,000 employees in the Bureau of Reclamation and 400 engineers in Denver, who have been investigating these sites and...we must say that those engineers are all wrong."

"My point is to demonstrate to this committee that they would be making a great mistake to rely upon the figures presented by the Bureau of Reclamation when they cannot add, subtract, multiply, or divide," said Brower. "My point is not to sound smart, but it is an important thing."

DAVID BROWER

The Making of the Environmental Movement

By Tom Turner

Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015
308 pp., \$29.95 hardcover



THE MAN WHO BUILT THE SIERRA CLUB

The Life of David Brower

By Robert Wyss

New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016
409 pp., \$34.99 hardcover

This excerpt from Brower's audacious and historic testimony is taken from *The Man Who Built the Sierra Club: A Life of David Brower* (Columbia University Press, 2016), one of two new biographies appearing a decade and a half after the passing of the "Archdruid" at the age of 88. Brower's skirmish with pro-dam, pro-development Western congressmen is recounted in the other biography as well: *David Brower: The Making of the Environmental Movement* (University of California Press, 2015). The author of the former is Robert Wyss, a journalism professor at the University of Connecticut who has also written for many prominent publications. The author of the latter is Tom Turner, a friend and lieutenant of Brower's at the Sierra Club and later, at Friends

of the Earth, as well as an author of several other books and hundreds of articles on conservation.

Both Brower biographies are highly engaging, and well worth reading for anyone interested in learning more about the larger-than-life, crusading activist who was without a doubt the greatest American conservationist of the latter half of the twentieth century.

Brower fundamentally altered American society and our attitude toward not just untamed rivers and wilderness areas, but toward the human prospect itself. He once proclaimed: “We’re not blindly opposed to progress, we’re *opposed to blind progress.*”

He was also one of the key catalysts in the transformation of the conservation movement into the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas the former was focused primarily on natural resources management and land use in the nation’s wildlands and rural areas, the latter embraced both rural and urban areas. The environmental movement also embodied a more holistic approach to safeguarding an environment suitable for survival on a planet rampant with billions of humans, billions of tons of climate-changing greenhouse gases, tens of thousands of artificial chemicals and toxins, thousands of nuclear weapons, and innumerable other threats to ecosystem integrity and human health.

David Brower may well have been the reincarnation of legendary conservationist John Muir, a hero of his who founded the Sierra Club in 1892 and served as its first president for 22 years until his death in 1914, after losing the epic battle to keep a dam out of scenic Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. Both Muir and Brower were husbands and fathers, college dropouts (Muir from the University of Wisconsin and Brower from UC Berkeley), both fell head over heels in love with California’s Sierra Nevada mountain range, both lived for a time in spectacular Yosemite Valley before it was overrun by crowds and cars, and both were accomplished mountaineers and “peak baggers” in the High Sierra, John Muir’s beloved “Range of Light.” One difference between them was that while Muir was a devout Christian pacifist who avoided serving in the Civil War, Brower was a World War II veteran, a climbing instructor, and officer in the U.S. Army’s Tenth Mountain Division who saw action in northern Italy.

Sounding like a transcendentalist (Muir had met Emerson in 1871), John Muir’s exalted paean to the Sierra Nevada from his book *The Yosemite* is profoundly stirring, even more than a century after he wrote it:

Looking eastward from the summit of Pacheco Pass one shining morning, a landscape was displayed that after all my wanderings still appears as the most beautiful I have ever beheld. At my feet lay the Great Central Valley of California, level and flowery, like a lake of pure sunshine,

forty or fifty miles wide, five hundred miles long, one rich furred garden of yellow *Compositae*. And from the eastern boundary of this vast golden flower-bed rose the mighty Sierra, miles in height, and so gloriously colored and so radiant, it seemed not clothed with light but wholly composed of it, like the wall of some celestial city.... Then it seemed to me that the Sierra should be called, not the Nevada or Snowy Range, but the Range of Light.



Conservationist David Brower (1912-2000) in his prime

At the time Brower and the Sierra Club came out against the Dinosaur National Monument dams in 1954, the wildlife and wilderness conservation movement had atrophied considerably from the heady days of Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt — who seemingly set aside several new national parks, forests, and monuments even before breakfast every morning — while the environmental movement had not yet even been born. It took the revelations about pesticides and other pervasive poisons of naturalist Rachel Carson’s ominous book *Silent Spring* in 1962, and the environmental horror stories of the fifties and sixties, such as thick L.A. smog, the Santa Barbara oil spill, and Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River catching fire and burning a bridge, to jolt the environmental movement to

life. More broadly, intensifying concern about humanity's impact on the environment was perhaps an inevitable reaction to the mounting biophysical consequences of the post-war population and economic boom in an American populace that was becoming the most highly educated and affluent of any in human history.

Yet when Brower and the Sierra Club decided to oppose the Dinosaur National Monument dams, the American conservation movement was still embryonic at best. The Sierra Club itself was mostly a California-centric organization with just seven thousand members, one paid employee (Brower alone), an annual budget less than \$100,000, and little political influence outside of the Golden State. The successful campaign to keep dams out of Dinosaur National Monument — which ultimately enlisted more than 70 organizations — began an incredible transformation and a period of extraordinary growth in the conservation and environmental movements through the rest of the twentieth century. Some 20 million Americans participated in the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. Today, as Wyss observes, there are more than 12,000 environmental groups in the U.S., with a combined annual budget of \$16 billion; the National Wildlife Federation alone claims some four million members.

David Brower succeeded in the mid-twentieth century where his predecessor John Muir had not in the early twentieth century. Whereas Muir failed in his struggle to protect the sanctity of national parks from resource development, and a water supply reservoir was eventually constructed in Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park, Brower prevailed in his campaign to keep dams out of Dinosaur National Monument. Thanks to Brower and the Sierra Club, America upheld the principle that national parks and monuments should be sacrosanct, that is, protected from logging, mining, grazing, water development for hydroelectricity and water supply, commercial downhill ski resorts, or from wind farms, for that matter.

Yet victory came at a cost, one that became all too evident to Brower even before Dinosaur National Monument was "saved" from the clutches of the dam developers at the Bureau of Reclamation. The price to pay — a compromise that Brower regretted for the rest of his life — was an even larger, higher dam and reservoir at another beautiful site downstream on the Colorado River — Glen Canyon — so named by nineteenth century explorer John Wesley Powell. Little-known Glen Canyon was beautiful, wild, and remote, as well as chockfull of ancient Native American archeological artifacts, but it was not protected by national park status. When Brower finally did visit Glen Canyon before it was submerged under the rising waters of the Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell, he remarked that while "the river itself was a spectacular sight....the side canyons are beyond belief." These 125 side canyons bore marvelous names like Music Temple,

Hidden Passage, Mystery Canyon, Twilight Canyon, and Labyrinth Canyon. The walls of the last (Labyrinth Canyon) were so high, steep, and narrow that visitors could not see the sky above.

Iconic Western writer Wallace Stegner called the colorful, striped Navajo Sandstone that abounded in this slick rock landscape, "surely the handsomest of all the rock strata in the country." The side canyon known as Music Temple featured a domed chamber of Navajo Sandstone 500 feet long and 200 feet high. Writes Wyss: "A break in the roof allowed a pool of creek water to pour down into a clear pool. A roof fissure served as a skylight."

Wrote Stegner of Music Temple: "The shadows in a chamber like this, the patterns of light and shadow, are miraculous and utterly unphotographable, and the walls re-echo with the slightest sound." Music Temple and many others were doomed by the decision to impound water hundreds of feet high behind the Glen Canyon Dam and create the second-largest reservoir in the U.S. after Lake Mead, impounded by Hoover Dam downstream on the Colorado River, close to Las Vegas.

For the rest of his life, Brower lamented that he had compromised, and given up Glen Canyon, to avoid the appearance of extremism. Although, like all mountaineers, he was willing to gamble and take risks, Brower feared that if the wild river preservationists came across as unreasonable extremists — opposed to all dams and all development — to politicians, the public, and the media, they might lose their credibility and support, and lose the battle at hand, which was to keep dams and reservoirs out of the national park system.

Authors Turner and Wyss stress that this bitter experience led Brower to become more hardline and uncompromising thereafter. And this stubbornness and willingness to go up against great odds and powerful political adversaries helped in the mid-1960s, when still more Colorado River dams were proposed that would back water upstream into Grand Canyon National Park (although the dams themselves would be located downstream of the park boundary). By this time, Brower and the Sierra Club had become adept at designing and using short documentary films and full-page advertisements (with the help of professional adman Jerry Mander) in prominent newspapers and magazines to press the preservation cause. One of the most famous of these ads appeared in six prominent publications in 1966, in response to the claim that a reservoir would permit tourists to better appreciate the beauty of the Grand Canyon's vertical walls from up close by boat. The headline read: "SHOULD WE ALSO FLOOD THE SISTINE CHAPEL SO TOURISTS CAN GET NEARER THE CEILING?" John Muir, a devout Christian whose appeals to his fellow Americans to save natural places often compared them to sacred shrines and religious temples — places where the Creator's handiwork was manifest and most sublime



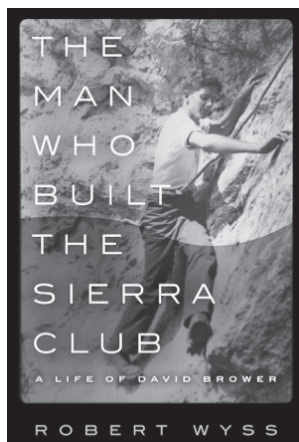
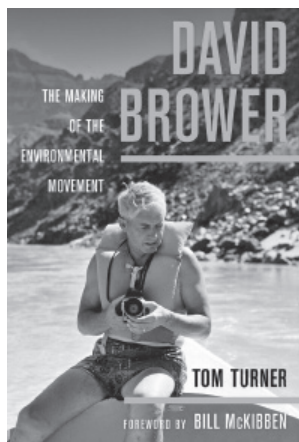
David Brower (above) was at the helm of the campaign to prevent two proposed dams from impacting Grand Canyon National Park; One of the side-canyons at Glen Canyon (right) along the Colorado River that was submerged under the rising waters of Lake Powell, after construction of the Glen Canyon Dam; Book reviewer Kolankiewicz in 1992 with two companions in the San Gorgonio Wilderness (lower right). In the late 1940s, a downhill ski resort was proposed on the north slope of San Gorgonio Mountain, at 11,503 feet — the highest peak in Southern California. Initially, the Sierra Club board and membership were split over the proposal. Although a skier himself, Brower was opposed to the proposed resort, which was never built; instead, Congress designated San Gorgonio a unit in the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1964 with the passage of the Wilderness Act. Brower played a major role in building public and congressional support for the Wilderness Act; Steamboat Rock (below) jutting 800 feet above the Green River at Echo Park.



— would have been proud of his spiritual descendant.

John McPhee emphasized Brower's militancy in *Encounters with the Archdruid*. This same trait was what led Russell Train (1920-2012), an administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency under Presidents Nixon and Ford, as well as president of the U.S. branch of the World Wildlife Fund, to say of this modern-day *Don Quixote*, "Thank God for David Brower. He makes the rest of us look reasonable."

Yet Brower's very boldness, brashness, passion, and indomitable spirit — and some would say growing arrogance — made it difficult for him to submit to authority, such as that of the Sierra Club's board of directors, who were his bosses. Author Tom Turner, who worked under Brower for a number of years both at the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, has an insider's view of the growing tensions between Brower and his board bosses as the sixties progressed, which culminated in Brower's forced resignation as executive director in 1969. Turner describes tense standoffs at board meetings over allegations of financial mismanagement and insubordination. Former friends and prominent Sierra board members such as landscape photographer Ansel Adams, board president Dr. Edgar Wayburn, and former climbing buddy Dick Leonard had become foes, allies turned adversaries.



Everyone, even his foes, acknowledged and admired David Brower's considerable gifts — his drive, work ethic, passion, creativity, leadership, ability to inspire. By the time Brower was booted out, Sierra Club membership had expanded ten-fold under his directorship and the Club had grown from an insular California institution to an outward-looking national one, the leading non-governmental conservation/environmental organization in the United States, if not the largest or the wealthiest.

Brower discovered and promoted talent. Paul and Anne Ehrlich wrote the best-selling, hard-hitting, polemical book *The Population Bomb* in 1968 because of David Brower; out of this book emerged the group Zero Population Growth, Inc. and the population stabilization move-

ment in the United States. Amory Lovins, the brilliant anti-nuclear physicist and renewable energy and energy efficiency advocate who went on to found the Rocky Mountain Institute and almost single-handedly refocus the energy policy debate in the U.S., could be said to owe his career to David Brower, who first discovered him as an avid amateur landscape photographer when Lovins was living in the United Kingdom. Speaking of landscape photography, Brower launched a series of expensive, "exhibit format," coffee-table books featuring the nature photography of Ansel Adams and later Eliot Porter. Some of these were risky ventures financially, but almost all of them paid off, and some sold a million copies.

After being forced out of the Sierra Club, David Brower went on to found three other noteworthy environmental organizations: Friends of the Earth (FOE), the League of Conservation Voters, and the Earth Island Institute. Each of these continues to play an important role in the spectrum of environmental groups today. In 1979, he stepped down as fulltime president of FOE but retained control of the board; in 1984 however, he was dismissed from the FOE board of directors due to clashes with other board members and staff over shaky finances and management issues. Looking back on this tumultuous era, one of FOE's presidents, Rafe Pomerance, commented: "Anyone in their right mind would not take a job to be CEO with Dave [Brower] as the founding chairman."

Brower, however, eventually made amends with many of his fellow environmentalist enemies. He never stopped being a Sierra Club member, even after being shown the door as an employee, and he even joined the board of directors in the eighties and rejoined it again in the nineties.

This *Social Contract* review would be remiss if it neglected the crucial, albeit sensitive, subject of David Brower, the Sierra Club, overpopulation, and immigration, in spite of the fact that one of the two authors (Wyss) omits it entirely, and the other (Turner) downplays and misrepresents it.

In fact, David Brower was very concerned about overpopulation as a primary driver of environmental degradation from at least the 1950s onward, in part thanks to his friend, mentor, and Berkeley neighbor, chemist, and geographer Daniel B. Luten (1908-2003), a professor at UC Berkeley, whom Brower dubbed his "coach on population." Among other contributions to the environmental movement, Luten also served as a Sierra Club board member, FOE president, and an advisory board member of Carrying Capacity Network. At the 1958 biennial Sierra Club Wilderness Conference, he delivered a speech on population entitled "How Dense Can People Be?" An edited collection of his writings, called *Progress Against Growth: Essays on the American Landscape*, appeared in 1986. In it, Luten warned of the potentially catastrophic

consequences of continued population growth: “We all of us, must know one thing. The growth in numbers, so familiar to us, cannot continue; some day it must cease — it will cease either by a decrease in birth rates or an increase in death rates.”

As for David Brower himself, Stewart Udall (former three-term congressman from Arizona, Secretary of the Interior during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and a one-time Brower nemesis over the proposed Grand Canyon dams) quoted him on population in Udall’s classic history of the American conservation movement, *The Quiet Crisis*: “Dave Brower expressed the consensus of the environmental movement on the subject in 1966 when he said, ‘We feel you don’t have a conservation policy unless you have a population policy.’” In a 1996 interview, Brower, then in his eighties, expressed regret at having had four children himself before he fully comprehended the threat posed by overpopulation.

In 1997-1998, Brower was one of the original supporters (along with the Ehrlichs and Senator Gaylord Nelson) of a Sierra Club referendum campaign initiated by long-time Ohio Sierran Alan Kuper and his colleagues with SUSPS (then Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization) to put the Club back on record in favor of lower immigration rates to halt U.S. population growth. Brower then withdrew his support, because as a member of the Sierra Club board of directors at the time, it conflicted with the board’s official position, which was to take no position on immigration levels.

Immediately after the 1998 vote, in which Sierra Club members — harangued by their board, Club president Adam Werbach, and other Club leaders that they would be siding with racists, nativists, and xenophobes if they opted for reduced immigration rates — voted approximately 60-40 percent to reject the call for the Club to support a



The photo (above), “Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada, from Lone Pine, California, 1944,” depicts the stunning east-facing ramparts of the Sierra Nevada mountain range from the Owens Valley, with the shadowed Alabama Hills and a grazing horse in the foreground. In the background, piercing the sky like a spear tip, is Mt. Whitney, at 14,495 feet, the highest point in the U.S. outside of Alaska. It appears in Ansel Adams’s *This Is the American Earth*, a book of photos with co-author Nancy Newhall. In the book’s foreword, David Brower wrote in part: “It is a stirring book.... It needs to be stirring, stirring of love for the earth, of a suspicion that what man is capable of doing to the earth is not always what he ought to do, of a renewed hope for the wide spacious freedom that can remain in the midst of the American earth.”

reduction in immigration levels for explicitly environmental reasons, Brower spoke out against the board's position, telling *Outside* magazine: "The leadership are fooling themselves. Overpopulation is a very serious problem, and overimmigration is a big part of it. We must address both. We can't ignore either."

Still later, in May 2000, during the last months of his life, in a dramatic gesture reflecting the degree of his disillusionment with the leadership of the organization to which he had dedicated so much of his life, David Brower resigned from the Sierra Club board of directors. "The world is burning and all I hear from them is the music of violins," he said. He added, "Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us and immigration is part of that problem. It has to be addressed."

So at the very end of his long and extraordinary life, when all was said and done, David Brower actually resigned from the Sierra Club board of directors in good part because it refused to take a stand against overpopulation and the excessive immigration driving overpopulation in the United States. One might have thought that this would merit some attention and comment or analysis in these two long, otherwise very thorough and thoughtful biographies. Yet Wyss omits it entirely, even as he indulges in salacious innuendo that Brower was a closeted homosexual or bisexual (which is intriguing but ultimately immaterial to this reviewer), while Turner, who does cover the issue, gives it short shrift and neglects to say that Brower actually resigned from the board because of it. Turner also mischaracterizes the Sierra Club's position on the immigration issue over the years. "The Sierra Club had long held the position that population growth overall must be halted, but had shied away from the contentious issue of immigration," he writes. This is not quite true.

Back in the heady days of 1969, the Sierra Club argued for "the people of the United States to abandon population growth as a pattern and goal; to commit themselves to limit the total population of the United States in order to achieve a balance between population and resources; and to achieve a stable population no later than the year 1990."

In a 1978 statement on U.S. population policy and mass immigration, the Club urged: "Congress to conduct a thorough examination of U.S. immigration laws, policies, and practices. This analysis should include discussion of:

1. The impact of immigration of different levels on population trends in the United States,
2. The disproportionate burden on certain states, and
3. The effect of immigration to the U.S. on population growth and environmental quality in this country."

In 1980, the Sierra Club testified to the Select Com-

mission on Immigration and Refugee Reform (Hesburgh Commission), stating: "It is obvious that the numbers of immigrants the United States accepts affects our population size and growth rate. It is perhaps less well known the extent to which immigration policy, even more than the number of children per family, is the determinant of the future numbers of Americans." The Club also testified that: "[It is an]... important question how many immigrants the United States *wants* to accept and the criteria we choose as the basis for answering that question."

In July 1988, the Club's Conservation Coordinating Committee stated that: "Immigration to the U.S. should be no greater than that which will permit achievement of population stabilization in the U.S."

While it is true that the Sierra Club never actively lobbied in Congress to reduce immigration rates, it is not true that the Sierra Club had nothing to say about immigration or avoided this controversial issue altogether. Rather, it at least acknowledged immigration's considerable and growing demographic role as a driver of U.S. population growth, and it acknowledged that this growth had environmental consequences. It recognized that immigration would have to be scaled back sooner or later. This was true at least until the mid-1990s, when "social justice warriors" (SJWs) began to infiltrate and overpower the Club. Today the SJWs run it.

A September 2016 message from Sierra Club executive director Michael Brune to Club activists reads in part:

Senseless tragedies like the recent police shootings of Terence Crutcher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte, North Carolina, can fill us with despair and leave us feeling helpless. The list of unjustified killings of black people in our nation — a list that was too long when it had even one name on it — continues to grow. But as long as we have a voice, we are *not* helpless — and we should only truly despair if we're afraid to raise that voice in the name of justice.

The Sierra Club's mission is to protect both the natural and human environment. We cannot claim to truly fulfill that mission if our volunteers, our staff, our members, our partners, and our communities are forced to live with the violence and hate of racism on a daily basis. Racist acts of violence tear apart the fabric of humanity in ways that actively work against our ability to protect and create environments for all people to enjoy and feel safe.

Black Lives Matter, and that is why we continue to stand in solidarity with those demanding justice, accountability, and action to confront the racism and inequality that has allowed these tragedies to persist.

As we've stated before, standing boldly against racism, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, sexism and other forms of hate is the only way we can tear down the systems of oppression and exclusion that have divided our country for far too long.

This missive prompted one long-time Sierra Club member to observe: "I feel I get more messages from Brune about non-enviro matters than on conservation." It's all about the "intersectionality" which is now all the rage among the progressive left and cultural Marxists.

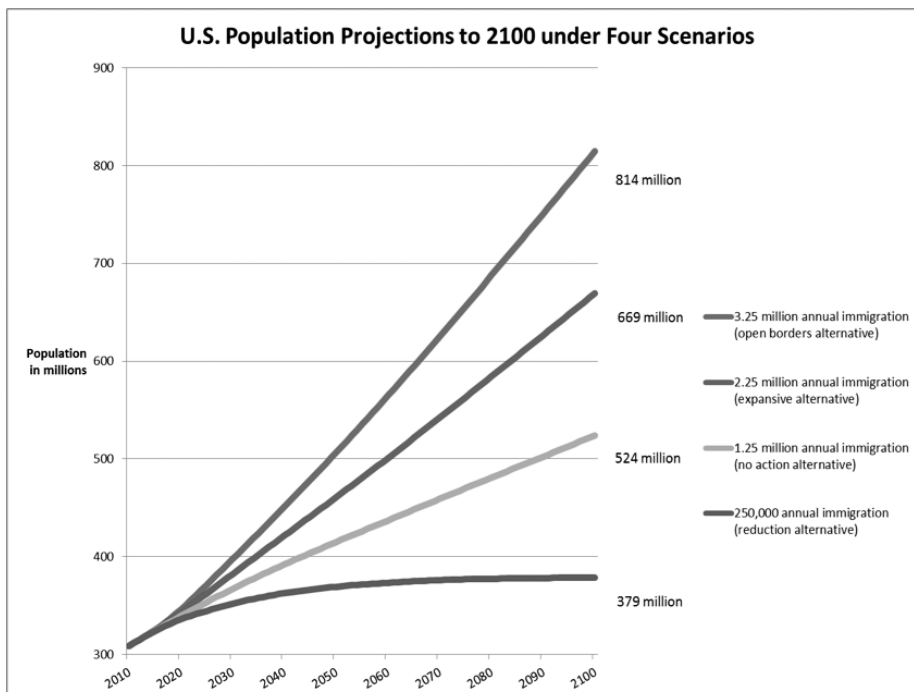
The Club leadership's hardening line in the 1990s and 2000s toward those who argued that it could ill afford to overlook immigration rates if it hoped to safeguard the American environment from overpopulation was likely bolstered by the infamous, initially anonymous donation it received in excess of \$100 million from Wall Street hedge fund multi-millionaire and posh Newport Beach resident David Gelbaum. "I did tell [Sierra Club executive director] Carl Pope in 1994 or 1995 that if they ever came out anti-immigration, they would never get a dollar from me," he confessed to *The Los Angeles Times* in 2004.

In 1996, the Club board of directors, by then in thrall to the SJWs, had adopted a policy stating that: "The Sierra Club, its entities, and those speaking in its name will take no position on immigration levels or on policies governing immigration into the United States." The board then began vehement, scorched-earth attacks on those who challenged this policy, especially in the 1998 referendum campaign and against a SUSPS-backed slate of candidates for the board of directors in 2004 — Frank Morris, David Pimentel, and Dick Lamm.

By 2013, the Club's leadership decided that it was time once again to take a position on immigration levels after all, in open defiance of its own 1996 policy to take no such position. Along with a cabal of other leading national environmental groups, it opted to support "comprehensive immigration reform" then being pushed by the Obama administration and congressional Democrats, which would perhaps double existing already high legal immigration levels of a million plus, as well as provide a "path to citizenship" for illegal immigrants already here, thus encouraging future illegal immigration. One conservative estimate is that this would result in annual immigration rates of two million plus. If such a rate were to be maintained to the year 2100, by that year there would be 670 million residents in the U.S., more than a doubling of current numbers. By the year 2200, at this rate there would be 1.3 billion Americans, equal to India's population at present. Under the Sierra Club's now essentially open borders approach, there could be over 800 million United States residents by 2100 (see graph below).

If David Brower had been willing to resign from the Sierra Club board in 2000 because the leadership refused to recognize that immigration needed to be reduced, what would he think of the Club's current SJW leadership, which has, in essence, embraced open borders and endless, environmentally ruinous, U.S. population growth? I think he would be spinning in his grave, anxious to arise from the dead just so he could lambaste the Sierra leadership and resign all over again.

In 1999, the year after the Sierra Club leadership had viciously attacked and maligned those members who



U.S. population projections to 2100 under four immigration scenarios; the Sierra Club's current pro-mass immigration and pro-amnesty stance on immigration is probably somewhere between the highest and next highest projections.

Source: *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on U.S. Immigration Policy (2016)*, chapter two, Progressives for Immigration Reform

http://www.immigrationeis.org/ieis-docs/PFIR_Final-Immigration-EIS-2016may-complete.pdf

had advocated that the Club return to its earlier position in favor of limiting immigration to allow for U.S. population stabilization, I met with one of those maligned members in his office at The Wilderness Society on Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D.C. It was none other than Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day and renowned environmentalist. In a tribute to Sen. Nelson I wrote for *The Social Contract* after his passing in 2005, I described this meeting:

[Nelson] told me he was so disgusted, that later that year when a door-to-door Sierra Club fundraiser knocked at his Kensington, Maryland, home he gave the young man a lecture rather than a donation....When the father of Earth Day tells an organization to take a hike, they should know they're on the wrong path.

It is unfortunate that Tom Turner and Robert Wyss, authors of two otherwise fine, absorbing accounts of conservation giant David Brower, would choose to ignore his principled if controversial stance on population and immigration, which was consistent with his views about human impacts on the biosphere and in particular on this portion of the biosphere — the American Earth. Were they unaware of Brower's opposition to mass immigration and endless U.S. population growth? Did they think it was unimportant? Are they embarrassed or mortified by it? Are they anxious that disseminating his views might tarnish his reputation? It may well be. In my experience, millennial audiences and younger environmental activists now seem all but clueless and completely ignorant of the first Earth Day generation's population concerns. They express bafflement and awkward bemusement that population size and growth, to say nothing of immigration rates, have any bearing at all on environmental degradation. Their kneejerk, reflexive reaction to any

such suggestion is that it has to be "racist."

Perhaps as a result, nowadays it is all too typical of contemporary authors, even older ones, to give short shrift to population and to meekly abide by the tightening taboo against any mention at all of immigration when it comes to environmental conservation. David Brower's own son Kenneth, an accomplished author in his own right, released a book of interviews in 2012 with people his father had influenced, *The Wilderness Within: Remembering David Brower*, which also all but ignored his father's stance on population and immigration.

It appears that today's environmental writers and authors would prefer to bury the population issue along with our buried environmental heroes such as David Brower, Gaylord Nelson, Edward Abbey, Daniel Luten, Albert Bartlett, Alan Kuper, Stewart Udall, and others for whom population was of paramount concern.

If the population issue were already resolved, this wouldn't matter so much. Alas, that is not the case by a longshot. Global numbers, now at 7.4 billion, are surging by 90 million every year — at a rate that has actually been increasing, not decreasing, for the past decade — and the already bulging U.S. population of 325 million continues swelling by about three million more per annum. This cancerous growth is like a malignant tumor for its hosts, Uncle Sam and Mother Earth; unless reversed, it will lead to the same outcome as other malignant tumors. Continuing rapid population growth will only have negative repercussions for the environment and quality of life of the beautiful country and life-nurturing planet that David Brower dedicated his life to defending. His outspoken opposition to unsustainable, harmful growth deserves neither neglect nor opprobrium but recognition and praise, and it is disappointing that neither of these biographies — for all their merits — deign to offer it. ■

SELECT DAVID BROWER QUOTES

Each chapter of *The Man Who Built the Sierra Club: A Life of David Brower* starts with a quote from this environmentalist sage. Here are some samplings:

"There is a lot to be learned from climbing mountains, more than you might think about life, about saving the Earth, and not a little about how to go about both. Tough mountains build bold leaders, many of whom, in the early days, came down from the mountains to save them."

—Brower, *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run*

"We do not inherit the Earth from our fathers, we are borrowing it from our children."

—Brower, *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run*

"Conservationists have to win again, and again, and again. The enemy only has to win once. We are not out for ourselves. We can't win. We can only get a stay of execution. That is the best we can hope for."

—Quoted by John McPhee in *Encounters with the Archdruid*

"I hate all dams, large and small. If you are against a dam, you are for a river."

—Quoted by Jane Kay in "Friends Recall Brower's Natural Gifts"