

Midd Senior Focusses on Outstanding Conservationist -- David Brower

By POLLY HALLETT

Thursday, Jan. 18, as part of the Winter Term Lecture Series, Peter Goodwin, '73, gave a lecture and slide show entitled, "David Brower - the Archpriest of Conservation." About forty people were present in Munroe Faculty Lounge for this event.

Goodwin described Brower as the most important person in the conservation movement, taking a quote from Stuart Udall, who called Brower, "The most effective single person on the cutting edge of the conservation movement."

The slides were included, said Goodwin, "to give an idea of what Sierra Club books do." These slides were taken on Goodwin's hiking trip through the North Cascades, an area saved from the timber industry by David Brower.

The basic premise for the conservation movement is that "humanity lags behind technology" and the assumption that "man is not transient; resources must be saved for future use." Brower takes this further when he says "98% of the U.S. is not wilderness, 2% of this is under pavement. The remaining 2% wilderness must be saved."

Goodwin briefly outlined the Brower "gospel": "Technology must do more with less" (Fuller), "What is the good of the house without a pleasant planet to put it on?" (Thoreau), and "We have met the enemy and he is us" (Pogo).

Some Brower originals were also included: "Technology is driving through the world's resources at 128 mph, and is accelerating.", and "Technology can flatten San Francisco and make two Los Angeles's in a state that only deserves one

Goodwin also described the paradox of conservation and how it affected him personally. "If people come in and see areas, they will get interested and try to save it from being spoiled, but even their coming in has spoiled it a little." One case of public neglect was that of Glenn Canyon, now Lake Powell thanks to a dam. Brower lost that fight, but prevented the building of three other dams. However, in gaining public support, Brower's behavior was construed as lobbying, and the Sierra Club lost its tax deductible status. So, although Brower saved parts of the Grand Canyon, he lost his Sierra Club executive position.



Peter Goodwin

Goodwin continued, "In my trip along the North Cascades, there was a problem. You don't want to see anyone, but if you don't then no one is thinking of what you are...the beauty and need for conservation of the land." There is the additional dilemma of the land itself. Along the North Cascades, firewood is not replaced quickly enough to support a large number of campers. Another example of too many people is Ship Rock.

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Brower made the first ascent (one of 33 first ascents in his career), but since then, too many people needing to be rescued has caused the Indians who own the peak to close it.

Goodwin ended his lecture with a final question...How to save the land. The conservation movement needs reasons for blocking development or sufficient funds to buy the land to save it. Brower, he said, wants to save the land for all people for all time, but, in the words of Muer, founder of the Sierra Club, "when you try to pick something out from anywhere in the universe, you find it is attached to everything else."