

David Brower sets environmental agenda for the 90's

By Andrew Levinson

David Brower, one of the United States' most renowned environmental activists, addressed a packed Dana Auditorium on Tuesday night.

Brower, former Executive Director of the Sierra Club and founder of Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute, called for a new environmental agenda.

Brower called the population crisis one of the most pressing environmental problems. There is a fundamental need for living with less impact and using less of the world's resources, he said.

"Somehow decisions must be made so that the earth's population will not continue to climb but can phase back down to something that the earth can sustain," he said.

Brower cited some alarming statistics. Within the past eighty years the

earth's population has tripled, in the past twenty enough soil has been lost to desertification to feed 40 percent of the world's population, and in the past century four times as many resources have been used than in any time before then, he said.

"The numbers are tragic, but they aren't as tragic compared to the demographic drain which numbers don't tell of the U.S. alone," he said. "Five percent of the world's population uses at least one third of the world's resources."

Brower criticized the ineffectiveness of mainstream environmental organizations to promote real change.

"When you adopt a policy on forming policy you are getting in a little too deep...I'm reminded of what FDR was told by William Douglas: 'any government bureau over ten years old should be abolished.'"

Brower also denounced the use of nuclear and hydro-electric energy and called conservation a viable alternative.

"Conservation makes a lot more money than building new power plants."

Hydro Quebec, a giant hydro-electric project in the Quebec province of Canada that is home to the Inuit and

Cree Indians, will cause irreparable damage to the environment, Brower said.

"There should be no James Bay II project whatsoever. There are so many much more effective ways to get the kind of energy you can get from Hydro Quebec," he said. "It's an absolutely ridiculous waste of money."

"In the course of one generation we

will destroy culture and wilderness we can't repair. I hope that Vermont is first in voting it down. It's not sustainable. What you wipe out out can not be rebuilt ever again. Energy conservation is the way," he added.

Brower also criticized traditional economics for not taking into account the harmful effects of growth.

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Lacey, Sargent join Planning Committee

By Teresa Cooper

The Planning Committee announced last week the appointment of Cheryl Lacey '84, Dining Services office clerk, and Tiffany Sargent, director of Student Employment and Volunteer Services, as the two staff representatives to the committee.

The appointments enlarge the committee which was comprised of seven faculty members and administrators.

The two new representatives expressed their satisfaction that the staff will have representation on the planning committee.

Lacey hopes that the appointments will increase the input of staff in college decisions.

"We're in a unique position. A lot of things are open to us. We can go in a lot of different directions and I think the administration has been really receptive," Lacey said.

The draft planning document is divided into five different planning areas, one of which is entitled structure and governance. This includes discussion of employee issues, and lists four

improvements which need to be implemented between different areas of the college community: clarity, communication, accountability and trust.

"I really want to work on those four topics and in particular that part about trust," Lacey said.

This section of the document says that the committee wants to "work to build a climate of trust in which members of the student body, faculty, staff, and administration are encouraged to feel a sense of ownership in the institution."

"We've pretty much been in touch with all stratas of the college, not only as staff but also as alumni," Lacey said. "We will have various meetings with staff and then report back to the committee."

Lacey said that both she and Sargent have seen Middlebury from different perspectives.

"Both of us are alumni, both of us worked here as students. I worked in the Crest room for five years," she said.

Sargent said that she too is interested in soliciting staff opinion.

"It's going to be a tremendous challenge," she said. "It will be important to hear the voices of as many staff as are willing to give some input."

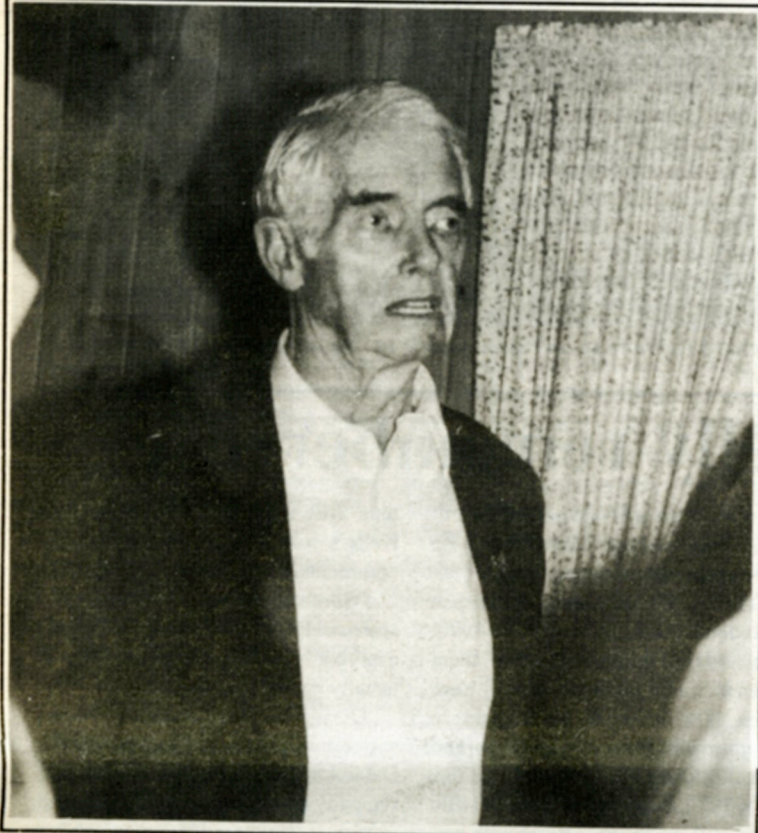
"It's time for the staff to speak up without feeling they will be judged," she added. "I would take particular interest in what happens with the Governance Committee. Space might be one area in which many staff will be interested."

"This is a very exciting time in the history of the college, and I'm glad to be a part of everything going on now," Lacey said.

Sargent said that she feels both, "honored and excited," to join the Planning Committee, and looks forward to a "great learning experience."

Sargent said that she sees a "a need for rebuilding our sense of community."

"I see a sincere interest on the part of John McCardell to make that happen," Sargent added, "I think its going to take alot of time and alot of work to rebuild but I'm confident we are on our way."



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Brower

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"Economics is a form of brain damage," he said. "We need something that economists haven't been doing. They have not been taking into account the two most important facts. What does the project cost the earth, and what does the project cost the future?"

The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in June will not offer the answers to the environmental crisis, Brower said.

"As far as I'm concerned, sustainable development is contradictory. That course of action is not leading the way we want to go. Trying to heal our illness by continuing what caused it is

like trying to sober up on martinis," he said.

Brower also cited the lost of species as inexcusable. He said that we are losing a species of plant or animal at the rate of one a minute.

"It's not good news what we are doing to life. Evolution isn't doing this to life. We are doing that, and we are doing that with our greatest addiction of all, our addiction to growth. We are going way beyond the resilience of the Earth," he said.

Brower also described the work of the Earth Island Institute, of which he is co-founder.

"We want all the cultures, all the colors, all the stepstones of the economic ladder, all the ages, and all the sexes to work together, to put aside

their differences, to see what we can do about putting things back together," he said.

"There's a lot to restore. Its not just nature. It's a little arrogant to try and restore nature. Perhaps the best thing we can do is learn to step back and let nature restore itself," he concluded.

Stephen Trombulak, Associate Professor, Biology and Environmental Studies, called David Brower an inspirational leader of the environmental movement.

"To many of us, he is the modern day John Muir, both warrior and shaman. He is the leader of the charge against those who would destroy are natural heritage for personal gain and a visionary that has shown us what to stand for and what is possible," he said.