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Brian Allen Drake, *Loving Nature, Fearing the State: Environmentalism and Antigovernment Politics before Reagan* (University of Washington Press, 2013).
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Introduction by Jacob Darwin Hamblin, Oregon State University

Environmental issues have not always divided people along party lines. Anyone who teaches American environmental history probably gets a kick out of bursting this bubble among students, when showing how many crucial environmental initiatives were initiated or backed by Richard Nixon, a U.S. president from the Republican party. Yet it is hard to ignore that this bipartisan support was fleeting, and by the late 1970s a distinctly anti-regulatory, anti-government, and pro-business stance put many conservative politicians into a predictable position vis-à-vis environmental issues. As a political platform, "the environment" eventually seemed a better fit for the Democrats, who were comfortable assigning the federal government with a regulatory role.

As scholars, perhaps we should be less concerned with the irony of early Republican support for environmental issues, and more concerned with trying to understand what motivated them. Were those Republicans any less "environmentalist," simply because their brand of nature-protection did not fit the mold of subsequent years? It may be that their anti-government, individualistic visions of the natural environment shared a great deal of common ground with those whose environmentalist credentials remain completely intact today.

In *Loving Nature, Fearing the State*, **Brian Allen Drake** challenges us to reconsider what it meant to be an environmentalist in the postwar United States, and he does it by exploring the place of anti-statism within the movement. He juxtaposes two figures whose reputations could not be more different, yet who shared remarkably similar outlooks. One of them is a staple of environmental literature—Edward Abbey, whose *Monkey Wrench Gang* and other writings provided enough inspiration to nature-loving saboteurs to forever mark him as a radical environmentalist. The other was no radical, but instead was a paragon of conservatism—AuH_2O himself, U.S. senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater. Not only was he the 1964 Republican presidential campaign rival to Lyndon Johnson, he also was a passionate nature photographer and believer in nature protection. Drake links these men using the concept of anti-statism, and draws them together with others, too, such as those who opposed government-mandated fluoridation of water.

I invited **Jeff Crane** to participate in this roundtable because of his expertise in environmental politics, especially in the western United States. An associate dean at the University of the Incarnate Word, he is the author of *Finding the River*, which explores the story of the Elwha, a river in the far northwest corner of the country. Crane's book traces the winding history of the river's salmon, dams, and people through tumultuous changes in public perceptions about nature, land, and resource use. [1]

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[1] Jeff Crane, *Finding the River: An Environmental History of the Elwha* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2011).

Our second commentator, independent scholar **Ryan H. Edgington**, has written extensively about environmental issues and politics in the southwest United States. His book *Range Wars* explores the tangled relationships between the federal government and local people in a different context—that of the White Sands Missile Range, in New Mexico. Anti-statist rhetoric animated local ranchers who tried in vain to pry the land out of federal hands throughout the Cold War.[2]

Offering our final comment is independent scholar **Thomas Jundt**, author of *Greening the Red, White, and Blue*. Like Drake, Jundt sees environmental consciousness arising from quarters not typically appreciated. For Jundt, love of nature has been linked to consumer culture, with "green consumption" acting as a kind of resistance against the excesses of corporate capitalism. He perceives nature protection as connected closely to distrust of big business.[3]

Before turning to the comments, I would like to pause here and thank all the roundtable participants for taking part. In addition, I would like to remind readers that as an open-access forum, *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews* is available to scholars and non-scholars alike, around the world, free of charge. Please circulate.

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[2] Ryan H. Edgington, *Range Wars: The Environmental Contest for White Sands Missile Range* (Lincoln: Universi of Nebraska Press, 2014)
[3] Thomas Jundt, *Greening the Red, White, and Blue: The Bomb, Big Business, and Consumer Resistance in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Comments by Jeff Crane, University of the Incarnate Word

I fondly remember what I call my Edward Abbey phase when I was an undergraduate, writing editorials and letters to the editor that were essentially paraphrasings of Edward Abbey's work, echoes of his angry rejection of America's obsession with growth and careless destruction of nature. Cactus Ed has always remained important to my teaching as I include his essays, assign *Desert Solitaire*, and take students on a pilgrimage to the original trailer site in Arches National Park. But in my most recent work I struggled with where to place him in the modern environmental movement and I wish I had read this book sooner. Brian Drake makes a strong case for Abbey's importance. As for Senator Barry Goldwater, I must admit to viewing him through the traditional interpretation of him as a right-wing hard-liner with little regard for environment or government's role in protecting the environment. For both these reasons reading Drake's new book was a wonderful experience and education for me.

Drake provides personal and historical background for both figures, quickly moving to their careers. For him, childhood and young adulthood within nature plays a key developmental role for both Goldwater and Abbey. He details the childhood of Goldwater, camping with his mother, learning a deep love for photography and wild places, and his early career as a landscape photographer who maintained a relationship with Ansel Adams. I was surprised to learn that Goldwater's political career was essentially launched with the publication and attendant travel and marketing of his first photo book. Likewise, Abbey's childhood, particularly his experience of Appalachia and the devastation of that region by coal mining companies, as well as their abuse of employees and damage to local communities, informed his ongoing distrust of corporations and government. A transplant to the region in his college years, Abbey fell in love with the desert landscape.

With Goldwater and Abbey, the author found two men that articulated strong anti-state positions but also took stands and promoted programs that undercut their ideology and public pronouncements. Goldwater, in particular, struggled with his embrace of free-market capitalism and critique of federal government programs such as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). His criticism of the TVA was blistering and he equated the program to those of the Soviet state. But he willingly abridged that strong ideological position to support the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Arizona Project (CAP) to provide more drinking and irrigation water for the Phoenix and Tucson region. CAP ended up being the kind of wasteful federal boondoggle that Goldwater despised. Drake cogently sums it up, "the CAP now subsidizes the region's drinking water, a state of affairs that, had it occurred anywhere else, Goldwater would surely have denounced."(Drake, 46)

Drake's discussion of the anti-fluoridation movement is of particular interest and complicates our understanding of early environmentalism in the Cold War era and

culture. He folds this movement in nicely with Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, and the body of activists opposing extensive chemical use. Drake's explanation of Carson's important work and arguments is very well written. In support of his efforts to pull the "antis" back from the margins of history, he especially emphasizes Carson's arguments against "authoritarian" power being able to arbitrarily poison people and nature while eroding Americans' civil rights. He also shows that, in contradiction to contemporary conservatives' willingness to tolerate certain amounts of pollution and chemicals in the environment and bodies, relying on the difficulty in isolating and identifying particular chemicals or compounds as the source of illness to argue against regulation, antis argued that any amount was too much.

Drake strives diligently to remove the kook label from this movement that is largely the result of the John Birch Society and what he terms "the Ripper Effect." This is a reference to the mad Air Force General in *Dr. Strangelove* who launches World War III while expounding upon "precious bodily fluids" and "distilled rain water."[4] Drake acknowledges the weakness of the antis' science. However, by comparing their arguments and concerns over fluoridation to movements that are clearly legitimate, such as the anti-chemical campaigns following *Silent Spring*, he legitimizes antis' protests and concerns. Moreover, Drake's outstanding incorporation of Carson quotes that correspond with anti rhetoric, further strengthens his argument for their legitimate fear and the need to recognize their role in the nascent environmental movement.

A weakness of the section is the failure to incorporate Michael Egan's arguments in *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of Environmentalism* into his analysis of antis' strategy and rhetoric. In addition to the fact that the Greater St. Louis Committee for Nuclear Information (CNI) raised awareness and fear of radiation and other threats to human health, increasing popular support for anti-chemical legislation and bolstering the case of anti's, those opposed to the introduction of fluoride into drinking water employed similar strategies and rhetoric as did the CNI and Barry Commoner. For example, they spoke frequently of fluoride being deposited in bones and baby teeth and even used the argument by the CNI in their public debate with the Atomic Energy Commission, that it was necessary to take a wider ecosystem approach that considered all possible sources of Strontium-90 poisoning; the antis employed the same argument. Pro-fluoride government officials could not simply measure the fluoride absorbed through water but must also consider the wider ecosystem and the other sources of fluoride in the environment and acknowledge the cumulative impact. Drake does compare this strategy to Carson's emphasis on cumulative poisons in the body. But Egan shows that the CNI made this argument prior to the publication of *Silent Spring*. A more thorough examination might have more effectively elucidated how these numerous

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[4] On the off chance that someone has not seen the scene Drake references, here it is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1KvgtEnABY

fears connected and overlapped, paving the way for the environmental reforms of the following years.[5]

It is always nice to be surprised by a new book and, I admit this with a little embarrassment, I was caught off guard a few times by Drake's work. One of those moments is in the discussion of Goldwater's environmental moment in the early 1970s. Shocked by the air pollution he observed while flying, requiring instrumentation to land during the daytime in Phoenix, and disturbed by the amount of pollution left by recreationalists in the Grand Canyon, he began to articulate an environmental position. The loss of downstream sediment because of the Glen Canyon Dam, with negative impacts on the Grand Canyon's Colorado River banks and habitat, also informed his revision of his anti-government stance. Goldwater began to assert that government regulation was necessary to protect the environment. For a brief moment he became a vocal supporter of increased government regulation. Although he didn't vote on several of them, it is not likely due to opposition or fear of voter retaliation, but, according to Drake, more likely a reflection of his lackadaisical voting record as a senator.

Goldwater's brief environmentalist phase is important materially and historically as he lent rhetorical weight to environmental regulation and co-sponsored some important bills during the creation of an environmental regulatory state during the Nixon administration. For example, he claimed that the Environmental Protection Agency originated in legislation that he had co-sponsored and he did co-sponsor the senate version of the 1970 Clean Air Act. Goldwater also supported the creation of wilderness areas in Arizona. His insistence on the need for government regulation to protect the air, water, and ecosystems, as well as to preserve parks, is startling given not only his general opposition to federal power but also because of the right's absolute rejection of environmental regulation in the contemporary era.

Of particular interest is Goldwater's role in the expansion of Grand Canyon National Park. In 1969, the fiftieth anniversary of the park, he introduced legislation that would provide stronger protections for land in the Grand Canyon, increasing the size of the park by a third and including twice as much river distance inside the new boundaries. Working closely with members of the Sierra Club and Wilderness Society, including discussions in his own home, and representatives of the Havasupai Indians and ranching and sporting constituencies, he created what he saw as the crowning glory of his career to protect a place he loved, "one of nature's most magnificent creations"(92).

As part of the complex deal, the bill allowed 56,000 acres to be removed from the park to be restored to the Havasupai. The tribe's ability to support itself had been seriously truncated with the creation of the park and protection of other federal

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[5] Michael Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of Environmentalism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

lands early in the twentieth century.[6] As the American Indian Movement gained strength in this era, the Havasupai and other tribes argued for the restoration of lands that were unfairly and illegally taken from them. Goldwater had been a champion of Indian rights in his career and saw the legitimacy of their concerns. He was likely quite proud of his ability to craft a bill that accomplished so much for various constituents. Hence his anger when the Sierra Club bailed on him and instead supported a competing bill proposing a much larger park. Drake doesn't discuss the degree to which sympathies to the Havasupai plight created overwhelming criticism of the Sierra Club by Americans, particularly after the showing of "Canyon Shadows' by *60 Minutes.*[7] The episode portrayed environmentalists as insensitive to the needs of native peoples. This anticipates later criticism of the Sierra Club and the rise of Environmental Justice. During the debates over park expansion Goldwater stated "I cannot comprehend the vast ignorance and fundamental lack of understanding of the history and culture of the Havasupai which characterize a majority of the national leaders of the Sierra Club" (95). The affronted senator characterized them as selfish and unaware of the needs of the tribe.

In my own work I have hewed pretty closely to the economic argument that conservatives began rejecting environmentalism with the energy and economic crises that arose in the 1970s, and Drake employs this interpretation as well. This particular argument might have been strengthened by incorporating Adam Rome's assertion of a spreading land ethic that peaked with the national land use bill co-sponsored by President Nixon and Washington Senator Henry Jackson that triggered such a strong response from the Chamber of Commerce and the creation of the jobs versus environment rhetorical strategy of the right.[8] But it also seems that the opportunity to explore another angle is lost here. Goldwater's reaction to the perceived treachery of Sierra Club leaders (he does seem to have a legitimate complaint) is practically hysterical. He wrote a letter to the Sierra Club denouncing them and quitting the organization and condemned them publically. Goldwater also turned against environmentalism and his own measures at that time, taking up the mantle of limited government and growth and prosperity again. It may not be that he is simply emblematic of or a leader of the conservative backlash against environmentalism. Positioned as he was, as a national voice in support of environmental regulation and lands protection, when he turned against these agendas and the groups that supported them, his denunciations likely had greater

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[6] Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).
[7] Will McArthur, "It Seems Like We Should Be on the Same Side," in Michael Egan and Jeff Crane, editors, *Natural Protest: Essay on the History of American Environmentalism* (New York: Routledge Press, 2009). This article captures some more of the complexity of the fight over the Grand Canyon Park expansion and the efforts to restore land to the Havasupai.
[8] Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

power to turn others as well. The principled and understandable stand of the Sierra Club in protection of national park lands then became a form of extremism in the eyes of Goldwater and other conservatives who retreated from supporting environmental programs. Developing this interpretation, if accurate, further expands our understanding of why so many Americans turned against environmentalism.

While Goldwater swung from position to position regarding government and the environment, another Southwesterner, a transplant from Appalachia, provided a running critique of America that was consistent in its willingness to criticize multiple facets of American life while not adhering to one ideological position. The reactionary and progressive positions of Abbey are laid out in depth, with Drake using a number of entertaining quotes to demonstrate Abbey's disdain for the "power combine," industrial tourism, immigrants from Latin Americans, and the trappings (traps) of modern life. Some historians may quibble with the number of quotes used but frankly I found them useful and I believe that historians are not that familiar with Abbey's work. Seeing the original language in all its luster, crankiness, and humor is essential to understanding his appeal, his polarizing impact, and his role in the development of environmental thought and protest.

It was a pleasure reading the sustained analysis of Abbey's writing and views of the world. Drake provides a valuable service in not only arguing for Abbey occupying a better recognized place and role in the environmentalism of America in the second half of the twentieth century, he also mines Abbeys' fiction, essays, lectures, interviews, and journals to provide the reader with a full portrait of this irascible iconoclast. While it is easy to take offense at something Abbey wrote, he did target pretty much anyone at some point in his writing as he attempted to deconstruct many normative beliefs such as the obsession with GDP, economic growth, and the value of use over the protection of nature. Academics, the Forest Service, ranchers, park rangers, tourists, businessmen, the military, miners, immigrants, cowboys, and so many others suffer from the slings and arrows of his writing at some point. While Abbey's critiques are the key subject for Drake and many others, they are rooted in his passionate embrace of nature and the wild. Abbey's use of landscape description, stories, personal perspective, and humor makes his a great voice for wilderness and desert.

Drake does not tackle a strong contradiction in Abbey's critique of the state and explication of the need for wilderness. He does show how Abbey's view of industry and destruction of the land originates in his childhood in Appalachia, arguing that for Abbey protection of wilderness constituted a form of social justice. But while lumping Big Government with Big Business, Abbey fails to acknowledge that the wilderness he sees as key to successful guerilla war and revolution, as well as the basis for an anarchist, freeholder's society existed only because of the power of the state. Moreover, he does not explore the inevitable consequences of land distribution and small farming operations in this wilderness, the collapse of ecosystems and game populations. I always wondered at this failure in Abbey's

thinking, particularly in light of his criticism of impoverished Latin American nations and immigration. Drake provides the only reply really possible, that Abbey was much better at criticism and puncturing cherished beliefs and ideology than he was at proposing social solutions.

A minor weakness of the study of Abbey's writing is the neglect of Wallace Stegner's influence on Abbey. Many writers who participated in the Stanford Creative Writing Program have neglected Stegner or denied his influence. A careful reading of essay collections such as *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs* and *Sound of Mountain Water* and Abbey's essays illustrates Stegner's influence. In addition, the regional slant and the emphasis on individualism and masculinity in western landscape is similar between the two writers. Indeed, there are passages by Abbey's that are almost indistinguishable from Stegner's "Wilderness Letter." While Abbey's strong critique of development and anti-state position are departures from Stegner's own positions, the robust regionalism of Abbey's fiction and non-fiction, along with the powerful use of descriptive prose and decrying of aspects of American life that diminish society and nature, bear strong similarities to his mentor's writing.

Overall, this is an excellent book that opens the way for further discussion of conservative participation in environmentalism, more exploration of how to define Environmental Justice, and a more complete understanding of the importance of wilderness preservation in the second half of the twentieth century.

Comments by Ryan H. Edgington, Independent Scholar

In concluding his analysis of Barry Goldwater, Brian Allen Drake says, "Goldwater was indeed an environmentalist. The tougher question to answer is, what kind of environmentalist?" (111). While the question was targeted at the grandfather of modern conservatism, it is also a question that might be asked of any of the individuals and groups in *Loving Nature, Fearing the State*. Examining Goldwater, antifluoridationists, free-market environmentalists, and Edward Abbey, Drake aptly reveals that environmental ideology prior to 1980 transcended the Left's faith in state based solutions. Antistatists who employed arguments that leaned on environmentalism were not always environmentalists *per se*. But before the Reagan era antistatist ideologues played a more central role in environmental thought-making that was not necessarily opposed to protecting nature. Instead they raised questions about the proper function of government in the process.

As Drake readily admits, studying antistatist environmentalism can be vexing (18). For example, could antifluoridationists *really* be environmentalists? And if so, what does that mean for how we define post-war environmentalism? Attempts to reconcile conservative notions of liberty with environmental protection were rarely neat and tidy. The case studies Drake explores reveal both the contradictions and nebulousness of antistatist environmentalism(s). In the spirit of the H-Environment Roundtable format, two questions drive my review. First, "what kind of environmentalists," if they can be called that at all, are the subjects of Drake's book? Second, what can the limits of their ideology reveal about postwar environmentalism?

Antifluoridationists saw the injection of sodium fluoride into drinking water with the wider environmental concerns of the time in mind. While many anti-communists organizations, including the John Birch Society, were among those groups questioning fluoridation, Drake shows that more than conspiracy theories drove the movement. Some "antis" seeing ties between their cause and DDT even reached out to Rachel Carson hoping she would take up the call. But as Drake notes, "for antifluoridationists, government was not the solution to an environmental threat like sodium fluoride. It was the problem. Thus the antifluoridation movement emerged as a distinctly libertarian-tinged antistatist version of the more familiar government-friendly 'liberal' postwar environmentalism. In the process it revealed one of environmentalism's most interesting characteristics: its ability to serve as a vehicle for ideological critiques" (55). Yet there were limits to this vision. Antifluoridationists showed great interest in bodily ecologies, usually couched in notions of disease, and they tied those interests to the perceived corruption of nature by the pro-fluoridation crowd, which included everyone from doctors to civic leaders. Yet it appears that those concerns rarely translated to a significant alarm for the health of ecosystems. Or should we see those ties as implicit? My guess is that the same could be asked of mainstream environmentalists. What is clear is that

the developing environmental movement moved antis to think about the chemicals and their bodies in new ways.

Following similar anxieties about the role of the state in everyday lives, free-market environmentalists led by a cadre of economists, including John A. Baden, Richard Stroup, Terry Anderson, and Donald Leal, sought to reveal the flaws of agencies in the business of environmental protection. That included the Forest Service, which they saw as built upon an imperfect bureaucratic platform that benefited large timber interests more than any other group. In the process of questioning top-down solutions, some free-market environmentalists argued for the "extensive, if not complete, privatization of resources" as one ideal cure-all to environmental problems (120). Knowing that ownership could not alone solve the problem, they also leaned on tort law as second instrument. Yet in touting the market and courts as a solution to environmental degradation (and Drake deftly unpacks the many economic theories behind the movement), the voices at the forefront of free-market environmentalism often lacked introspection. As Drake notes, a fatal weakness in the movement was "the inability to see the similarities between itself and the command-and-control system it has so passionately opposed" (137). And their "free-market" answers only existed in the abstract. Where did economic theory leave off and environmental philosophy come in? Free-market environmentalists were invested in the politics of environmentalism. But did a passion for nature drive their principles?

While antis and free-market ideologues reflected how environmental ideals could transform antistatist ideology and theory, it was Abbey and Goldwater who embodied the idea of loving nature and fearing the state the most. Drake does a particularly excellent job of bringing Abbey into clarity. That is quite the feat considering Abbey could not explain his own ideologies with much precision. As Drake shows, rather than simply being a champion of wilderness Abbey also sought the preservation of wild spaces for political reasons. To combat the "Power Combine" (a mix of large corporate interests and the government agencies who served them), "preserving the wilderness and living close to the land was not only an escape from the social problems of civilization, it was also a remedy for them" (177).

Interestingly, one of Abbey's major reasons for wilderness advocacy was that it was there that the resources existed for a new sort of agrarian society that would lead "to a more equitable, stable, and fulfilling life for all citizens" (178). With that ideal in mind it is hard to ignore Abbey's opposition to immigration on the grounds that it would lead to denser populations, a condition upon which he argued police states arose (161). Of course a police state already existed across the region he called home, one that had historically cast doubt on the rights of Americans. One wonders if Abbey would have been for or against the Border Patrol. The limits of his environmentalist principles reflected the messy political principles he held.

More than any other person in the book, it was Goldwater who seemed to struggle most with his evolving antistatist ideology and his love for Arizona's natural

wonders. And throughout his career there seemed to be many Goldwaters when it came to environmentalism. As Drake argues, "Barry Goldwater as environmentalist emerges as a man trying to serve two masters, pulled by loyalties and sentiments that did not always complement each other" (23). He at once loved the Colorado River, while also supporting the Colorado River Storage Project reclamation plan. The CRSP was the fundamental legislation that led to the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam (a project Goldwater would later regret). With the environmental turn of the late-1960s, he came to have faith in the role of government in protecting nature only to later denounce those same ideals. In the wake of the Grand Canyon Enlargement Act (1975) he found himself at odds with environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club as well. They criticized Goldwater's successful push to transfer some Grand Canyon lands to the Havasupai peoples arguing it actually downsized the total land in the park. The conflict did not lead Goldwater to warm to the increasingly powerful environmentalist cause.

A conservative at heart, there were obvious limits to Goldwater's changing environmentalist ideals and faith in "green government" (93, 95). In many ways, those constraints affected the rest of the subject matter in *Loving Nature, Fearing the State*. Drake has offered a wonderful book not only because it is well written, but also because of the questions the book raises. This leads me back to the start of the review, if they were environmentalists at all, what kind of environmentalists were Goldwater, Abbey, antis, and free-market economists? As Drake notes, "'conservative' and 'liberal' are of limited usefulness in describing complex postwar political and cultural movements like the environmental movement" (183). Although they ignored other instances of environmental decline in their own Arizona backyard, Abbey and Goldwater loved *particular forms of nature* where they believed the state was not particularly suited to act as stewards.

Antis and antistatist environmental ideals raise larger issues. Antis were certainly touched by environmental concerns, namely those surrounding DDT. But they do not seem to be lovers of nature in the way that Abbey and Goldwater were. Antis never seemed to tie their bodily health to the health of the rest of the environment. Instead they focused on the ties between their corrupted bodies and antigovernment politics. Similarly, antistatist economics for all of its criticism of the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and other agencies engaged in land stewardship, never seemed to coalesce around any form of action. But therein lay a key component of the book. As Drake notes, successful or not "like Barry Goldwater and conservative antifluoridationists, free—market environmentalists exemplify the fascinating ways in which antistatism and environmentalism affected each other in postwar America" (115).

All of this is to make the point that Drake's book has exploded any tidy definition of environmentalism that might have existed between the end of World War II and the ascendency of Reagan to the presidency. That seems to me a good thing. Drake argues that historians should pay more attention to political ideology in assessing postwar environmentalism. "Big ideas matter as well," he says, "and American

environmentalism's development has been deeply interwoven with classic American arguments about individual rights and centralized power" (183). At the same time, the rise of antistatist environmental thought reflects just how powerful the mainstream environmental movement was. Here it seems that as environmental fervor tinted antistatist politics it transformed them too. The postwar environmentalist conventions we often teach need to be revisited. We should all be asking: what kind of environmentalists are they? I know my students will when I assign Drake's excellent book in by American environmental history course.

Comments by Thomas Jundt, Independent Scholar

Brian Allen Drake's highly enjoyable *Loving Nature, Fearing the State: Environmentalism and Antigovernment Politics Before Reagan*, is written as a corrective to the common perception that postwar environmentalism was the exclusive domain of the left, with environmentalists seeking a more robust regulatory state to protect the planet from those that would do it harm. Drake demonstrates that, contrary to desiring a more powerful state, some of those who expressed environmental concern believed that nature would suffer greater harm from a corrupt government and bureaucratic ineptitude than it would if left largely unregulated.

The ideas of antistatism, as they relate to environmentalism, are explored through the examples of free-market environmentalists, anti-fluoridated water activists, writer Edward Abbey, and, especially, Senator Barry Goldwater, who is afforded two of the book's five chapters. It is clear that these groups and individuals share a distinct distrust of government, but their idiosyncratic natures sometimes make it difficult to determine where, exactly, their beliefs fit with the broader discourse of postwar environmentalism. As Drake notes in the Introduction, he has engaged in "intellectual bridge building" to bring this disparate group of characters together. But, to shift the metaphor, I sometimes wondered if they would have agreed with their host that they belonged at the same table. That is just one of the provocative issues raised by this book that would be fun to discuss with students.

Before he was known as a politician, Barry Goldwater, legendary Republican Senator from Arizona, was known for his stunning photographs of the Arizona landscape. In 1940, Goldwater took a 43-day rafting trip down the Colorado River, at a time when it ran wild and free from Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado all the way to the Hoover Dam on the border between Arizona and Nevada. This, along with his nature photography, might suggest an unyielding love of wild places – what Drake terms a love "sincere and long-lived." But Goldwater was never that simple. In practice, he surrendered his love quite willingly to economics, and "he dreamed of a Colorado River harnessed for human use." As a freshman senator, in 1953, Goldwater was a co-sponsor of a bill to authorize the Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado River Storage Project, including its controversial Echo Park Dam on the Green River in western Colorado that flows into the Colorado River. Goldwater supported dams for reclamation, which as a senator from an arid state he viewed as a legitimate function of government, but he detested dams when built for the federal government to produce and sell power—which he termed "galloping socialism." As Drake correctly, and pithily, concludes, "Goldwater wanted to have his wilderness and develop it too." Indeed, he voted against the Wilderness Act of 1964, even as he helped fund his presidential campaign that same year with a book of Arizona photographs that, Drake points out, "a modern, liberal environmentalist might hang on a living room wall."

Modern liberal environmentalists certainly might treasure a breathtaking photo of the Southwest landscape on a living room wall. But would a modern environmentalist stop there, content with the aesthetic nature that so charmed the Romantics and, by the late nineteenth century, preservationists? Or, would a modern environmentalist demand much more? These questions are at the center of the sometimes-muddy divide between the right and the left on attitudes toward the environment after the Second World War. One of the questions that I found myself sometimes struggling to answer as I read *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* was where, exactly, its protagonists were located on this divide. That is, were they traditional conservationists, or had their field of concern expanded to encompass the broader anxieties of postwar environmentalists? Following the war a growing number of environmentally concerned citizens began seeking to preserve the integrity of the ecology of the entire planet, or at least large regions of it. This often placed them at odds with big business and developers, and the politicians who supported them. And, it is what makes Drake's exploration of Goldwater during the era of the first Earth Day in 1970, along with "free-market environmentalists," so intriguing.

During the Earth Day era, when Republican President Richard Nixon famously proclaimed the 1970s "the environmental decade," created the Environmental Protection Agency, and signed the Clean Air Act, Goldwater's antistatist stance appeared to soften. He spoke in favor of Nixon's initiatives and other government regulations to protect the environment. However, as Drake notes, "in practice his commitment to federal environmentalism was not always as strong as his rhetoric." (88) That sounds more like the definition of a politician than an environmentalist. Goldwater did commit to more traditional conservation efforts that were less burdensome for business, like new wilderness areas in Arizona, the repeal of mining permits in the state's national monument areas, and the expansion of Grand Canyon National Park. Tourism was, after all, an important industry for the state. But by the mid-1970s, even his rhetoric no longer supported expanded environmental legislation, and he denounced the EPA and Clean Air Act as hindrances to free enterprise while seeking to limit their authority, if not eliminate them altogether. Even when Goldwater did support environmental legislation, he did not appear particularly bold. Drake notes that he voted to extend the Endangered Species Act in 1978, and, in the wake of the Love Canal disaster, supported the "Superfund" bill in 1980. He was also part of a unanimous Senate vote to renew the 1972 Clean Water Act. But when push came to shove, despite his rhetoric, Goldwater's affection for business and free markets could usually be counted on to trump his environmentalist leanings. It seems clear that Goldwater embraced romantic wilderness aesthetics, and was something of a conservationist. But was he, as Drake insists, "an environmentalist"? He was a champion of government-funded solar energy research, but I wondered how many of those dollars flowed to sunny Arizona.

If Goldwater was an "environmentalist," it was in a similar vein as another antistatist group that Drake identifies—free-market environmentalists. Free-market

environmentalists claim that government regulation is the reason for market failure that damages the environment. "For them . . . " Drake summarizes, "the 'system' is fundamentally sound and environmental degradation merely an indication of its imperfect function, easily solved by some institutional tweaking: removing a regulatory burr, tightening a legal screw, replacing a faulty bureaucratic part." Heavily influenced by the Austrian school of neoclassical economics and its acolytes at the University of Chicago, they are in agreement with Garret Hardin that the problem is a tragedy of the commons, and that the best way to protect nature is to privatize it.

It is somewhat difficult to discern whether the free-market environmental movement was as much a movement as it was an ideology that was embraced by leaders in business and government because it squared neatly with their emphasis on economic growth during the postwar era. Free-market environmentalists fault government regulation for inevitably being corrupted by the power of big business that stands to profit from environmental degradation. But if big business is doing the most to harm the environment, how will freeing it from regulatory restraints prove environmentally beneficial? Drake appears to believe that this is a fundamental absurdity in the philosophy, but he nevertheless argues that "what is certain . . . is that free-market environmentalism is a product of specific postwar historical trends." Certainly, that is true, but was one of the most significant of those trends neoliberalism and its cynical view of the environment? Drake notes that one of free-market environmentalism's leading lights was political economist John A. Baden, a member of Friedrich Hayek's Mont Pelerin society who once said that Milton Friedman should be canonized. Friedman insisted that the Food and Drug Administration should be abolished, along with all national parks. "There is one and only one social responsibility of business," he once stated, "to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud."[9] The ideas of free-market environmentalists have exposed faults in regulatory frameworks, and provided philosophical justification for limiting environmental regulations, but it is not clear that they have done much to protect the environment and, as Drake admits, their championing of free markets above all else has blinded them to many of big businesses' environmental pitfalls. In the end, I had trouble discerning whether they were truly concerned about the environment, or more concerned with protecting the sanctity of free markets.

And how would have anarchist environmental writer Edward Abbey reacted if he found himself seated at the same table with Goldwater and free-market environmentalists? Although Abbey once remarked that Goldwater was "too cute [and] lovable to hate," unlike Goldwater and the free marketeers, Abbey's disdain for the state was not centered on its threat to free markets. As Drake correctly observes, "he had even less faith in capitalism than he did in government." What Abbey feared

[9] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 133.

was not the power of the state, per se, but like a growing number of environmentalists in the postwar era the "Power Combine" of interlocked government and big business. For Abbey, the only way to limit the state to the will of the people was to somehow end business's control of the political system.

While the chapter on free-market environmentalists sometimes felt vague, the chapter on Abbey offers a wonderfully nuanced portrait that offers significant insights into the worldview of a complicated individual who is difficult to pin down. "If we can draw the line against the industrial machine in America, and make it hold," Abbey said, "then perhaps in the decades to come we can gradually force industrialism underground, where it belongs, and restore to all citizens of our nation their rightful heritage of breathable air, drinkable water, open space, family-farm agriculture, a truly democratic political economy." Abbey surely believed government was a threat to the environment, but he appeared to view business and its hold on government as an even greater risk.

Perhaps the most unexpected among those seated at Drake's antistatist table are the anti-fluoride activists. In a fascinating chapter, Drake places these opponents of fluoride into the broader environmental movement. While Goldwater and the free-market environmentalists were leery of government regulations that might interfere with markets, anti-fluoridation crusaders feared the state's public health efforts that altered the purity of water by adding sodium fluoride to drinking-water systems beginning in the early 1950s in and effort to fight dental cavities. Some even shared Abbey's fear of the Power Combine, pointing the finger of blame at collaboration by Big Aluminum and Big Government to create a market for sodium fluoride, a byproduct of the aluminum manufacturing process. Anti-fluoridationists believed that the chemical compound caused myriad health problems, "ranging from mottled teeth to cancer."

The "antis" sought to link their movement to Rachel Carson's crusade against other chemical contaminants in the environment, and after the popularity of *Silent Spring* urged Carson to take up the charge. The antis viewed themselves as environmentalists in a similar vein to those who in the late 1950s protested the mass aerial sprayings of DDT and dieldrin to eradicate gypsy moths and fire ants, and strontium-90 from nuclear testing fallout, as an infringement of civil rights. Given that the antis were already very active in the late 1950s and early 1960s, I was left wondering if Carson herself viewed fluoride as a similar environmental threat, and if she did why did she not include it in *Silent Spring*. It is clear that the antis hoped to gain from Carson's momentum, but it is less clear that people outside of the movement viewed fluoride as an environmental threat in a way similar to, say, strontium-90 from atomic testing fallout, rather than, say, something more akin to the addition of vitamin D in milk. I kept hoping that Goldwater might have an opinion on the matter, but it does not appear that he did. Participating in the anti-fluoridation movement may have, as Drake claims, "offered an easy pathway into environmentalism," but is there evidence that it actually did? Did they, like the St. Louis mothers who protested nuclear testing fallout and later transitioned to other

environmental issues, for example, tend to get involved in other environmental issues of the era?

In the book's Foreword, series editor William Cronon states, "We may be tempted to believe that their conservatism won out over their environmentalism," before wondering whether "environmentalism lost something important with their departure from the movement." It is a familiar lament; conservatives formerly supported environmentalism but they, tragically, no longer do. However, as Drake points out, Nixon was a shrewd politician, not an environmentalist. And while Goldwater certainly appears to have had much greater fondness for aesthetically pleasing wilderness than did Nixon, in the end, like free-market environmentalists, Goldwater could not support legislation that placed the needs of the environment before the desires of big business. Given that reality, it is hard to imagine that Edward Abbey would have viewed Goldwater and the free-marketers as environmentalists, and I wonder if many other environmentalists would either. It is not fair to expect *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* to answer the metaphysical question of when is an environmentalist *really* an environmentalist, but that question lingered after reading the book.

Brian Allen Drake has given us a very informative exploration of the seldom-examined ideas that a broad variety of antistatists held about the natural environment in the days between World War II and the 1980s. Although I sometimes wished for more information about how these ideas played out at the ground level, his crisp and clear writing will make *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* an enjoyable read for a broad audience. At 184 pages, it is an ideal length to assign to classes, where it will surely spark lively conversations. I am looking forward to that.

Response by Brian Allen Drake, University of Georgia

I'd like to thank Jacob Hamblin for organizing this roundtable, and Jeff Crane, Ryan Edgington, and Thomas Jundt for participating in it. I'm pleased to join the list of authors whose books have been featured in this forum, and I appreciate the thoughtfulness that Jake and the others show in discussing my work. Like Jeff Crane, I had my own intense (if not always nuanced) adolescent "Edward Abbey phase," and that seems as a good a reason as any, besides simple alphabetical order, to open my response by addressing Crane's comments.

Perhaps his most significant critique involves my chapter on antifluoridationists. My analysis would be strengthened, Crane argues, by incorporating Michael Egan's *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival.* Egan shows how Commoner and his anti-nuclear testing group, the Greater St. Louis Committee for Nuclear Information [CNI], were among the very first environmental activists to invoke ecological arguments as part of their campaign against fallout, several years before Rachel Carson employed a similar approach against DDT and its cousins. Since antis were doing something akin to this at the same time, Crane observes, possible connections are worth exploring. Linking Commoner *et al* to antifluoridationists "might have more effectively elucidated" how fears of strontium-90 and sodium fluoride "connected and overlapped, paving the way for the environmental reforms of the following years."

This is a good point. While they were aware of strontium-90 and occasionally brought it up in their literature, none of the antis I studied ever mentioned the CNI or Barry Commoner, and I am not sure how many of them were even aware of the man or the group (when they cited outside experts, they focused mainly on medical doctors and dentists and not scientists, although a few referenced the baby-tooth survey). It is also true that while fallout's dangers became clear rather quickly, thanks in large measure to Commoner and his allies, fluoridation's "dangers" remain debatable to this day. Nevertheless, Crane is right in pointing out just how often the two groups echoed each other's arguments, sometimes a half-decade or more before *Silent Spring,* and if I were writing *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* today I would take his suggestion to heart.

Next, Crane turns to Barry Goldwater. Goldwater's defense of Havasupai land claims during the campaign to enlarge Grand Canyon National Park mirrored many Americans' feelings, Crane writes. Even within the Sierra Club itself, some members questioned the tough stance against concessions to the Havasupai, foreshadowing the rise of the environmental justice movement as well as challenging the idea that wilderness activists always resisted that rise (see Will McArthur's argument in his essay in *Natural Protest*, which Crane cites). As with his environmental leanings

more generally, Goldwater here appears remarkably mainstream, even progressive, and this is a point worth more emphasis.

I would part ways with Crane, however, when he speculates about Goldwater's role as a catalyst for late-1970s anti-environmental backlash – "this interpretation," Crane writes, "if accurate, further expands our understanding of why so many Americans turned against environmentalism." I have encountered little evidence that Goldwater was a major inspiration for the era's anti-environmentalists, or even a minor one for that matter. Economic self-interest and ideological intensification provided more than ample motivation for them, I think, augmented by their deepening disgust with doom-and-gloom environmental rhetoric and "excessive" environmental regulations, as documented by scholars like Paul Sabin and Shannon Petersen. Hardcore conservatives, Sagebrush Rebels, and Wise Users may have appreciated Goldwater's green retreat, but they didn't need it for inspiration.[10]

Finally, Crane wishes for a deeper treatment of a "strong contradiction" in Edward Abbey's thinking, namely Abbey's desire for both strong wilderness protections and a weak central state. The problem is that wilderness protection requires a strong and active state, Crane notes, and meanwhile small farming has its own social and ecological costs which Abbey ignores. These, too, are good points, and the contradiction is not unique to Abbey. Donald Worster has observed that "[d]espite all their calls for government activism and regulatory power, [American] environmentalists in their heart of hearts share the same ideology of liberty and self-determination that has created a degraded environment….This confusing overlap…may pose the greatest intellectual difficulty the wilderness movement has, one that even its most thoughtful philosophers have never fully addressed or clarified." I touched on several of Abbey's contradictions, such as his opposition to immigration and his simultaneous call to restrict it *via* federal power, but I could have unpacked others such as the one Crane notes. Indeed, Abbey was a walking bundle of such contradictions, some of which he recognized and even embraced cheekily, and some of which he missed or disregarded. I might have spent many paragraphs calling them out, probably to the exhaustion of my editors and readers alike. Still, Crane's observation is a useful one.[11]

Ryan Edgington and Thomas Jundt, meanwhile, ask similar questions of *Loving Nature, Fearing the State.* Are the subjects therein *really* environmentalists, they wonder, and do they belong together under such a label? Edgington notes that the antis and the free-market environmentalists were limited in their focus and failed to

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[10] Paul Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Erhlich, Julian Simon, and the Gamble Over Earth's Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), Shannon C, Petersen, *Acting for Endangered Species: The Statutory Ark* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).
[11] Donald Worster, "Wild, Tame and Free: Comparing Canadian and American Views of Nature," in Ken S. Coates and John M. Findlay, eds. *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press , 2002), 264. Thanks to Paul Sutter for reminding me of this passage.

branch out into other areas of ecological concern. Free market ideas seldom moved from theory to "action," he observes, and antis rarely strayed beyond issues of bodily health to the "rest of the environment." Jundt concurs. He asks if antis, like the "St. Louis mothers" of the CNI, ever "transitioned to other environmental issues." He wonders as well if Goldwater was less an environmentalist than an old-school conservationist, given the senator's focus on wilderness, landscapes, and resource use, and then speculates as to what role political expedience may have played in Goldwater's environmental odyssey. Jundt senses, too, that free-market advocates were simply using environmental arguments in the service of their ideological ones. In the end, he asks if all these characters actually belong at the same analytical table. "It is not fair to expect *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* to answer the metaphysical question of when is an environmentalist *really* an environmentalist," Jundt concludes, "but the question lingered after reading the book."

I'm certainly glad to be relieved of any metaphysical obligations, but I do understand Edgington and Jundt's questions because I have wrestled with them myself. Early in the writing process I was keenly aware that I had embarked on a project whose subjects would not always blend seamlessly. I love it when historical figures go off the historical ranch (to use a Goldwateresque metaphor) to say and do things that both conventional and scholarly wisdom think they shouldn't, and I wanted to see what happened when I tried to find the unity underneath such wayward characters. In the quest for that unity, however, I came to believe that a certain messiness was inherent to the project, that to write this particular history required making peace with contradiction, blurred lines, and loose categorization in the interest of larger insights. Thus, while I strove for as much cohesion as I could muster, I accepted the stubborn divisions. They seemed honest as well as compatible with my interests and temperament as an historian. But your mileage may vary, as the saying goes; while Jundt is not entirely comfortable with this lack of unity, Edgington is more at ease with it. "Drake's book has exploded any tidy definition of environmentalism," he writes, "[and that] seems to me a good thing." This suggests to me that temperament and personal "comfort level" with ambiguity are important in shaping a reader's response to the book. Obviously, I have to agree with Edgington here. Had I abandoned *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* because of the rough fit of its subjects, I would not have been able raise the larger questions about environmentalism and ideology that I did.

Both Jundt and Edginton ask why, if antis and free-market advocates and conservative Arizona senators were *really* environmentalists, they weren't broader in their anxieties. How authentic was their environmentalism if they could not, in good ecological fashion, see the connections between their concerns and wider ones? This too is a good question, although I think it's a tad overstated. Antis of the organic-farming and alternative-medicine bent, for example, came to the antifluoridation movement precisely because they already had wider concerns about chemical contamination. And while he focused on conservation and preservation and did not seem deeply worried about DDT or toxics, Goldwater fretted about sprawl, solid waste, and air and water pollution as well. This was not

mere political expedience, either. Given his popularity, Goldwater had no need to pander to Arizona's environmental voters, and in personal correspondence he expressed the same environmental opinions that he did publicly. In short, he was no Nixon. Finally, many activists – indeed, most – who we would consider "legitimate environmentalists" have been "narrow." Alice Hamilton or Lois Gibbs are no less environmentalists, I would argue, because they are not champions of wilderness or endangered species or the land ethic.

The question is more relevant for free marketers. It can be difficult to know which love – nature or markets – is their true love when the chips are down, and it is likely than some merely use environmental protection to rationalize their ideological beliefs. We might, however, ask similar questions of left-leaning environmentalists as well. Are the concerns of environmental-justice proponents and ecologically-minded labor activists simply a function of their larger sociopolitical critique? Are civil rights activists who note racial disparities in exposure to toxic wastes doing "environmentalism" or "civil rights?" My response would be "both." Jundt is probably right to be suspicious of free-marketers' motives, and I might have been more wary of them myself in the book. Still, I see no reason why a person cannot be both a sincere environmentalist and a sincere ideologue, though the ratio may vary.

Finally, while the protagonists in *Loving Nature, Fearing the State* might have been narrow in their eco-concerns, those concerns are still remarkable in the context of recent history. I wrote the book with one eye very much on the present, particularly on the growing hostility of political conservatives to the environmental movement. Indeed, not only have modern conservatives rejected even the pretense of favoring environmental protection, they have often denied the very existence of environmental problems. In light of this, even the limited environmentalism of Goldwater and the antis seems astonishing. I confess that I find modern conservatism's antienvironmentalism utterly appalling, and in Goldwater *et al* I hoped to offer examples of a road not taken recently, with the small hope that it might help at least a few modern conservatives find a way back into the movement. My subjects could have been more committed or more ecumenical environmentalists, but a glass half-full is better than one fully empty, especially in this era of bipartisan as well ecological meltdown.

Thanks again to all the participants in this roundtable.

About the Contributors

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