

FOREMAN, Dave (1946-2022)

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FOREMAN, Dave (1946-2022)

William David Foreman, age 75, died on September 19, 2022, at his home in Albuquerque, from interstitial lung disease, surrounded by family and friends. Dave, as he was known to all, was an esteemed activist, thinker, writer, and speaker on conservation and environmental issues, an uncompromising advocate for sharing the Earth with other living beings. His half-century conservation career focused on protection of wild nature, especially wilderness and wildlife, and he coined the term “rewilding,” which was his special interest over the past several decades. His 2004 book *Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century* pointed the way toward new approaches to conservation in North America and worldwide.

Foreman was a natural leader and during his long career was a field director for The Wilderness Society and served on the national board of the Sierra Club. Seeing need for a more aggressive approach to wilderness and wildlife conservation than established conservation organizations, he co-founded Earth First! and served as its charismatic and unofficial leader for many years before moving on to be a co-founder of The Wildlands Project, dedicated to protecting a network of wilderness areas across North America, and serving as publisher of that organization’s esteemed publication *Wild Earth*. Dave was one of the first wilderness activists to see the importance of conservation biology (becoming an early member of the Society for Conservation Biology) and how it could inform creation of wildlands networks. Over the years he was also instrumental in creating the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (now NM Wild), and North American Wilderness Recovery, which spawned The Rewilding Institute (rewilding.org) to which he dedicated his energies in his last years. The Rewilding Institute continues to promote Dave’s vision of vast wildways stretching across North America and beyond, teeming with life, including those ultimate wilddeors, wolves, pumas, jaguars, grizzly bears, salmon, sharks, and other wide-ranging species and apex predators.

A gifted and prolific writer, Dave authored many books, including *Rewilding North America* (2004), *The Big Outside*, co-authored with Howie Wolke (1989), *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (1991), *Manswarm and the Killing of Wildlife* (2011), *Take Back Conservation* (2012), and *The Great Conservation Divide* (2014). His single work of fiction was *The Lobo Outback Funeral Home* (2000). Other writings have appeared in numerous collections addressing protection of wild nature. Dave’s speeches became legend and motivated many to become wildlands advocates for life. Dave usually ended his sermons with a wolf howl – and many wolf howls have followed his passing.

Dave is survived by his sister, Roxanne Pacheco, nephews Gerard Pacheco and Benny Pacheco, niece Monica Pacheco, and his beloved cats, Misty and Yampa. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Nancy Morton, herself an esteemed conservationist and retired UNM professor of nursing.

News of Dave's passing has spread quickly through the conservation community, and countless accolades and remembrances are pouring in to Dave's far-flung, yet tight-knit wild bunch of fellow wilderness advocates. Rewilding Earth (rewilding.org) will share many of these in coming weeks. A common theme to these fond memories is: *Dave Foreman changed my life, inspiring me to speak out for my wild neighbors*. Several have compared Dave to a giant tree in an old-growth forest—fallen to the ground now, but nurturing new life far into the future.¹

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