

Green Billionaires\$

How rich left-wingers control U.S. environmental policy.

By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.



"It's easy being green with Grandpa's foundation."

"In reality, an elite group of left-wing millionaires and billionaires, which this report refers to as the 'Billionaires Club,' that directs and controls the far-left environmental movement, which in turn controls major policy decisions and lobbies on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)."

—U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC WORKS, MINORITY REPORT

As a hydrologist, Dr. Jay Lehr was heavily involved in establishing the EPA in 1971 as well as writing some of the legislation passed by Congress to implement the EPA's mandate to protect the environment. By 1980, the laws were working to protect the environment with minimal disruption to the economy.

Beginning in 1981, however, he observed that liberal environmental activist groups realized the EPA could be used to advance their political agenda by "regulating virtually all human activities regardless of their impact on the environment." Lehr, now science director for the Heartland Institute warns: "Since that time, *not a single environmental law or regulation has been passed that benefitted either the environment or society.*"

(Italics added)

"Today," laments Lehr, "EPA is all but a wholly owned subsidiary of liberal activist groups." Its regulations "account for about half of the nearly \$2 trillion-a-year cost of complying with all national regulations in the U.S." Politicians love it because they can win votes by professing they are the protectors of the public health and wildlife. Even more significant, companies use "regulations to handicap competitors or help themselves to public subsidies." In short, the EPA has become a tool for special interests to manipulate self-serving environmental police at the expense of the environment and people.

Policy by Special Interest

Paul Driessen, a Washington-based environmental policy analyst for CFACT (Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow), has found that "U.S. environmental activist groups are a \$13 billion-a-year industry." While perhaps a bit high, it nonetheless shatters the poor-boy image that environmental organizations successfully promote through the mainstream media or in their shiny pamphlets. Environmentalism is big business, a juggernaut that uses false propaganda and pseudoscience to

deceive millions of ignorant Americans. Those millions who are innocently deceived become the shock troops to shut down business; especially the fossil fuel industry.

Books have been written (and ignored) on some of the inside workings of the Green juggernaut, but it wasn't until the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works published a very well-documented Minority Report that the magnitude of this truly destructive force became apparent. The 92-page report, entitled "The Chain of Environmental Command: How a Club of Billionaires and Their Foundations Control the Environmental Movement and Obama's EPA," shows that much of this money comes from a select few within the so-called one percent—the very rich group that progressive environmentalists love to hate.

Their wealth is staggering. Just 10 out of more than 200 of these foundations have assets over \$23 billion. Most of it is used to control the agenda for environmental activism by only funding high-priority issues. Then there are the environmental activist groups. Just 15 of the hundreds (or thousands) of these nonprofit groups had assets of \$7.9 billion in 2012. Together with

the foundations that fund much of their dirty work, the total assets of just these few organizations are more than \$31 billion.

Ron Arnold, executive vice president of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, has done in-depth analyses of these facts for decades and has written numerous books and articles detailing his findings. Of the top 100 nonprofit foundations, Arnold found “more than \$80 billion...in giving [by foundations] to environmental recipients from 2000 to 2012.”

Paul Driessen adds, “The liberal foundations that give targeted grants to Big Green operations have well over \$100 billion at their disposal.” Add to that the fact that most of green activism has very little overhead. Driessen’s estimated \$13 billion that funds green activism annually is almost entirely directed to stopping whatever business activities these attack dogs are paid by the foundations to war against that year. Says the Senate report: these “environmental activist organizations serve as the face of the movement and provide cover for where the secretive foundations direct their resources.” One of these donors, the Sea Change Foundation, is a U.S. foundation wholly owned by Klein Ltd., a foreign company “attempting to effect political change” in the United States.

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It’s a David-and-Goliath story, but not in the way you might expect. In just one comparison, Ron Arnold found that the “American Petroleum Institute’s (API) IRS Form 990 for the most recent year showed a paltry \$237.9 million in assets.” Asset for asset, “Big Oil is outgunned by orders of magnitude.” While API has to hire lobbyists, public relations firms and support groups, Big Green organizations, notes Arnold, have “millions of high-demographic members ready to be mobilized as needed” at no cost. It’s a David-and-Goliath battle all right, but contrary to conventional wisdom, Big Oil is David while Big Green is Goliath. Try to explain that to almost anyone on the street and they will call you a liar.

Three very prominent organizations play key roles as facilitators: the Environmental Grantmakers Association, the



EPA PHOTO BY G.J. MCCARTHY

Remember Al Armendariz? (See “EPA’s Tidal Wave,” RANGE, Summer 2013.) He was forced to resign from the EPA on April 30, 2012, after he said he used the Roman technique of “crucifying” the first citizen when arriving in a new town—in this case an oil company—in order to get the rest to fall in line. Prior to his appointment to the EPA in late 2009, Armendariz worked for a major environmental leftist group, the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP’s 2009 income was \$2.5 million from foundation grants and services), and was an expert witness for the Sierra Club. Once in the EPA, he immediately hired two more attorneys from EIP. He is now senior campaign representative for the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal.

Democracy Alliance, and the Divest/Invest movement. The EGA was created and funded by the Rockefeller Family Fund until 2007, when it became autonomous. Today, Arnold says it is made up of more than 200 private foundations which meet to determine what issues each foundation will be responsible for funding in the future. Although dated, the 1992 meeting of the EGA was taped and quietly purchased by

Arnold’s Center for Free Enterprise. Most of the discussions in these closed meetings are mundane and boring. Yet, others graphically describe how certain industries must be destroyed, along with the people employed by them.

The EPA Revolving Door

Activist groups encourage their “far-left environmental activist” members, especially their leaders, to take jobs in the EPA and other federal agencies and then work hand in hand with their former colleagues in far left environmental groups. The Senate Report warns: “The green revolving door at EPA has become a valuable asset for the far-left and their wealthy donors. In addition to providing insider access to important policy decisions, it appears activists now at EPA also funnel government money through grants to their former employers and colleagues.”

Remember Al Armendariz? (See photo.) There is deliberate, illegal collaboration between EPA employees and environmental groups. Among many dozens of corruption examples, the Senate report discovered damning emails (apparently the hard drive didn’t fail fast enough) that clearly showed a scheme whereby the Rockefeller Family Fund agreed to pay the salary of one Shalini Vajjhala to work at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. According to internal EPA documents, this arrangement benefited the agency as Vajjhala would have the opportunity to, “stake our claim there.” “Our” is the EPA Office of International and Tribal Affairs and “there” is the White House.

FOUNDATION ASSETS 2012

David and Lucile Packard Foundation	\$6,299,952,716
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	\$5,697,258,026
Heinz Family Foundation	\$ 117,095,904
Marisla Foundation	\$ 51,482,397
Park Foundation	\$ 366,405,008
Rockefeller Brothers Foundation	\$ 800,956,943
Schmidt Family Foundation	\$ 46,542,559
Sea Change Foundation	\$ 124,350,435
Walton Family Foundation	\$1,999,066,369
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	\$7,735,371,139
TOTAL	\$23,238,481,496

Assets for just 10 of approximately 200 foundations totaled over \$23 billion in 2012. These assets are used to fund and direct hundreds of radical environmental organizations. SOURCE: U.S. Senate

Then EPA administrator Lisa Jackson enthusiastically stated in another email, “I think it’s a fine idea and can only help EPA in the long run.” Diane Thompson, her chief of staff, affirming by writing: “My thoughts exactly. The more inside connections the better.” (Underline original.) After Vajjhala cycled through the White House and EPA, she returned to the Rockefeller Family Fund. Perhaps not surprisingly, Vajjhala is also a contributor to the *Huffington Post*, which is heavily funded by another foundation in this complex web of conspirators, the Park Foundation.

In yet another connection, Nancy Kete, a managing director at the Rockefeller Foundation and former employee of the EPA, is also the wife of John Beale, who is now in prison for fraud committed while working for the EPA. (See “Secret Science,” p. 62.) It was Beale who used highly questionable “secret science” to constantly justify ever-restrictive ozone and particulate matter standards that are now costing the United States up to a trillion dollars a year. In yet another illustration of the tight relationships between the administration, the billionaires club and the EPA, President Barack Obama appointed Kete to the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling.

A review of senior Obama EPA officials

makes clear that the agency actually sought “individuals with ties to large environmental groups for key leadership positions.” These groups are heavily rewarded by “garnering the lion’s share of donations from the billionaires club.” It is so bad that in 2009 there was a term coined within the EPA, “NRDC mafia,” because so many key positions throughout the federal government came from the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Direct Media Propaganda

As with so much else, the media is complicit in hiding the magnitude of the deception and the influence the billionaires club has on environmental goals of the radical green groups and on the policy formulation of the EPA. Warns the report: “The failure to openly acknowledge this force and the silence of the media with whom they coordinate further emphasize the fact that until today, the billionaire’s club operated in relative obscurity hidden under the guise of philanthropy.”

The billionaires club hides its efforts far “from the political stage.” Its efforts are “deliberate, meticulous, and intended to mislead the public,” claims the Senate report. *“What is clear is that these individuals and foundations go to tremendous lengths to avoid public association with the far-left environmental movement they so generously fund.”*

(Italics added.)

These foundations also have an extensive propaganda network in the U.S. media. The New York-based Park Foundation is just one example of dozens mentioned in the Senate report. The Park Foundation is run by Adelaide Park Gormer, who inherited her money from her father. She viscerally hates fracking. She believes it is evidence of “rape and pillage” of the earth by mankind. She funded hundreds of thousands of dollars of research by ecologist Robert Howarth of Cornell University allegedly “proving” fracking the “Marcellus Shale produces more greenhouse gas emissions than coal mining.” Like every other study done to prove fracking is harmful to the environment, Howarth’s study was fully discredited by other scientists, even other environmentalists. Facts don’t matter, however. Emotion is everything.

The Park Foundation also gives grants to media outlets like the *Huffington Post* which faithfully promote the false information. In this example, using the name Cornell University provides the credentials needed to make it believable to the millions of average environmentally concerned Americans. For instance, Park awarded *Yes!* magazine a \$50,000 grant which then referred to Howarth as “co-author of last year’s landmark Cornell University study, which established the staggering greenhouse-gas footprint of fracking.”

This kind of deception is the norm and it involves dozens, if not hundreds, of media outlets. Americans’ desire for clean air and water in a healthy environment predisposes them to be literally brainwashed. They believe evil corporations are destroying planet earth. They are deluded into writing letters to politicians, heavily promoting environmental candidates in elections, joining protests, and otherwise doing all they can to stop or destroy perfectly safe business activities that greatly improve the health and safety of the American people as well as the environment. Most disturbing is that these “innocent” Americans sacrifice their money and their time, all while enriching the pockets of the Billionaires Club—often the very people and companies they think they are stopping. The time is overdue to expose this corruption. Once exposed, the second step is to get rid of the incredibly corrupt EPA. ■

To read some of the transcripts, go to <http://www.undueinfluence.com/ega.htm>.

ECO-ORGANIZATION ASSETS 2012

American Lung Association	\$ 31,049,040
BlueGreen Alliance	\$ 3,179,681
Center for American Progress	\$ 12,282,335
Earthjustice (formerly Sierra Club Legal Def. Fund)	\$ 58,945,673
Environmental Defense Fund	\$208,751,208
Environmental Integrity Project	\$ 1,744,942
Greenpeace	\$ 15,313,140
League of Conservation Voters Education Fund	\$ 7,545,946
National Audubon Society	\$450,334,791
National Wildlife Federation	\$ 66,456,891
Natural Resources Defense Council	\$268,165,564
Sierra Club Foundation	\$ 98,974,748
The Nature Conservancy	\$6,168,924,112
Union of Concerned Scientists	\$ 8,195,448
World Wildlife Fund	\$450,932,452
TOTAL	\$7,850,795,971

Environmental organizations are well heeled with just 15 of the hundreds or thousands of organizations totaling nearly \$8 billion in assets. SOURCE: U.S. Senate