

Civil Disobedience

The timber industry is inspired solely by profit, ignoring the significance of the trees they chop down. In protest of their immorality, Julia Butterfly Hill climbed 180 feet into a 600 year old redwood tree called Luna in Stafford of Humboldt County in California on December 10, 1997, and remained there until December 23, 1999 to earn its protection from the Pacific Lumber Company. Miss Hill desired to protect the ancient redwood, slow down the decimation of trees, and raise awareness of the situation in the general public. The extensive length of her tree-sit and the conflict between the redwood activist group Earth First! and Pacific Lumber made the media flock to her cause. Whilst in the tree, Julia earned alliances with multiple celebrities and a number of steelworkers against Pacific Lumber Company. She did not give up on her tree-sit until the Luna Preservation Agreement was created, and her Luna was safe from the lumber company. She very much believed that “the only obligation I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think is right...a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience” (Thoreau). Her persistence led to the conservation of a tree that has been around for ages, exposing the heart of the lumber industry to the public in the process.

Source:

<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/julia-butterfly-hill-defends-california-redwoods-1999>

Statewide assessments can often times be a burden on everyone involved, from the students to the teachers. On April 15, 2008, Carl Chew refused to give the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to his sixth-grade students at a Seattle Public Schools' middle school. He saw the WASL as unfair for the students because of its bias and cold nature. He witnessed the WASL creating panic, insecurity, low self esteem, and sadness in his students. The test was too black and white, functioning under a pass or fail system instead of points earned. His stand against this standardized test resulted in a suspension until May 2, 2008. An anti-WASL group, the Parent Empowerment Network, recognized his efforts and even tried to get people to donate to make up for Chew's lost wages. Mr. Chew knew that other teachers felt the same about the WASL, but they were too afraid of the potential consequences. Their fear made it true that “in most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgement or of the moral sense” (Thoreau). Although Carl Chew's actions were majorly publicized, no long term changes were made. He did however make the issue known, and maybe even opened the door for future opposition.

Sources:

<http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Carl-Chew-s-statement-on-the-WASL-1271063.php#page-2>

http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2004363602_webwasl22m.html

The oil industry is another big bag monster lurking in the shadows. It was on December 19, 2008 that Tim DeChristopher decided to act against the immoral auctioning of Utah public lands to energy giants. He could not stand to see the public red rock lands be sold to oil and gas companies, so he made false bids on parcels of land. Due to DeChristopher's actions, further investigations were instilled and the parcels ended up being taken off the market because of the effect the energy development would have on the climate. He got a lot of public attention and produced an influx of support that caused the preservation of thousands of acres of Utah public lands. Tim DeChristopher said, "You can steer my commitment to a healthy and just world if you agree with it, but you can't kill it. This is not going away. At this point of unimaginable threats on the horizon, this is what hope looks like. In these times of a morally bankrupt government that has sold out its principles, this is what patriotism looks like. With countless lives on the line, this is what love looks like, and it will only grow." He continues to bring attention to the matter of climate conservation and is currently touring to spread his beliefs even more. The world changes one person at a time.

Source:

<http://www.peacefuluprising.org/tim-dechristopher/tims-story>