

Big Green Goliath wages anti-Keystone war

Mainstream media don't acknowledge that Big Green has much deeper pockets than Big Oil

[Ron Arnold](#) 20 May 2014

The "Kill [Keystone XL](#)" crowd isn't little environmental David up against a Big Oil Goliath. As usual, conventional wisdom isn't wisdom when the mainstream media ask all the wrong questions, and get all the wrong answers. Behemoth Big Green outstrips Big Oil in expendable revenue by orders of magnitude – if you know how to follow the money.

The mainstream media don't know how, and don't care enough to learn. Like most liberals, their staffs are afflicted with what 20th century futurist Herman Kahn called "Educated Incapacity" – the learned inability to understand or even perceive a problem, much less grasp or seek a solution.

They've been taught to be blind, unable to see Big Green as having far more disposable money (and far more power) than Big Oil. So they don't look into it.

They would never discover that the American Petroleum Institute's IRS Form 990 for the most recent year showed \$237.9 million in assets, while the Natural Resources Defense Council reported \$241.8 million.

Nor would they discover who started the anti-Keystone campaign in the first place. It was the \$789 million Rockefeller Brothers Fund (established in 1940). The fund's program is elaborated in a 2008 [PowerPoint presentation](#) called "The Tar Sands Campaign," by program officer Michael Northrop. He set up coordination and provided funding for a dozen environmental and anti-corporate attack groups to use his strategy, "raise the negatives, raise the costs, slow down and stop infrastructure, and stop pipelines." [Tom Steyer's](#) \$100 million solo act is naïve, underclass, cheap and poorly designed by comparison.

Mainstream reporters appear not to be aware of the component parts that comprise Big Green: environmentalist membership groups, nonprofit law firms, nonprofit real estate trusts (The Nature Conservancy alone holds \$6 billion in assets), wealthy foundations that give huge "prescriptive" grants, and agenda-making cartels such as the 200-plus member Environmental Grantmakers Association. They each play a major socio-political role, with the prescriptive nature of many grants meaning the foundations tell activist groups what they will do, and how they will do it, if they want money.

Invisible fact: the environmentalist movement is a mature, highly developed network with top leadership stewarding a vast institutional memory, a fiercely loyal cadre of experienced social and political operatives, and millions of high-demographic members ready to be mobilized as needed.

That membership base is a built-in free public relations machine responsive to the push of a [social media](#) button sending politically powerful "educational" alerts that don't show up on election reports. They also get hundreds of millions in free media from "mainstream" journalists who share their views and goals.

Big Oil doesn't have any of that. It has to [pay for lobbyists](#), public relations firms, support groups and advertising – which do show up on reports.

You don't need expert skills to connect the dots linking Keystone XL to Alberta's oil sands to [climate change](#) to Big Green. On the other hand, you do need detailed knowledge to parse Big Green into its constituent parts.

I spoke with Washington-based environmental policy analyst Paul Driessen, who said, "U.S. environmental activist groups are a \$13-billion-a-year industry – and they're all about PR and mobilizing the troops. Their climate change campaign alone has well over a billion dollars annually, and high-profile battles against drilling, hydraulic fracturing or [fracking](#), oil sands and Keystone get a big chunk of that, as demonstrated by the Rockefeller assault."

Driessen then identified the most-neglected of all money sources in Big Green: "The liberal foundations that give targeted grants to Big Green operations have well over \$100 billion at their disposal."

That figure is confirmed in the Foundation Center database of the Top 100 Foundations. But how much actually gets to environmental groups? The Giving USA Institute's annual reports show \$80,427,810,000 (more than \$80 billion – or \$6.7 billion per year) in giving to environmental recipients from 2000 to 2012. That's actual power and attack buying cash, not merely available assets.

I checked the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) and found they had just \$147.3 million in assets. By contrast, environmental donor Gordon E. and Betty I. Moore Foundation alone posted \$5.2 *billion* in assets.

Driessen pointed out another unperceived sector of Big Green: government donors. “Under [President Obama](#), government agencies have poured tens of millions into nonprofit groups for anti-hydrocarbon campaigns.” The Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior and other federal offices pay out enormous sums of your taxpayer money to advance agendas that often promote costly regulations, kill jobs, and reduce human health and well-being.

Weather Channel co-founder [John Coleman](#) adds, “The federal government is currently spending \$2.6 billion [per year] on climate change research,” and the only scientists who receive funding support the notion that plant-fertilizing carbon dioxide is now a dangerous pollutant.

This web of ideological soul-mates, like all movements, has its share of turf wars and dissension in the ranks. However, as disclosed on conference tapes I obtained, it shares a visceral hatred of [capitalism](#), a worshipful trust that nature knows best, and a callous belief that humans are not natural, but are the nemesis of all that is natural.

Lawyer Christopher Manes wrote *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization*, defending the “ethics” of radical environmentalism. His book title is bolder than his personal actions, however. He was all rage in the book but rakes in big bucks through his tax law practice and makes his residence in Palm Springs, that icon of civilization's glitz.

The legal branch of Big Green is varied. Earthjustice, (formerly [Sierra Club](#) Legal Defense Fund) raked in \$133.8 million in the past five years – comparable to many similar environmentalist law firms. Highly litigious attack groups that obtain [federal settlements](#) are numerous and thriving, such as the Center for Biological Diversity, which “earned” \$29.2 million in tax money over the past five years for suing the feds, often under carefully orchestrated legal actions that many characterize as “sweetheart lawsuits.”

It's not unusual for heirs of big money to dream of unmaking the source of their wealth, be it oil, mining, forest products or other capitalist businesses. Laura Rockefeller Chasin of the Rockefeller Family Fund once said, “It's very hard to get rid of the money is a way that does more good than harm. One of the ways is to subsidize people who are trying to change the system and get rid of people like us.”

The money reported to the [Federal Election Commission](#) is barely the beginning of what's really happening. It doesn't show you Big Green's mobilized boots on the ground, the zooming [Twitter tweets](#), the fevered protesters, the [Facebook fanatics](#), the wealthy celebrities preaching carbon modesty from the lounges of their mansions and private jets, or the friendly “mainstream media” who are always happy to advance environmentalist creeds they share with Big Green and Hollywood.

When self-righteous victims of Educated Incapacity insist that Big Oil outspends the poor little greenies, keep in mind the mountains of IRS Form 990s filed by thousands of groups, land trusts, lawyer outfits, foundations, and agenda-drivers. Keep in mind the way Big Green uses that money, and the militants it pays for, to control your life, liberties, livelihoods, living standards and even life spans.

They all hope America will never wake up and smell Big Green's untold hundreds of billions.

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