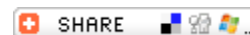




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SPECIAL REPORT: Working for Big Green can be a very enriching experience

By: [Mark Tapscott](#)
Editorial Page Editor
September 29, 2010

Leaders of 15 top Big Green environmental groups are paid more than \$300,000 in annual compensation, according to an Examiner analysis of the organizations' most recent IRS Form 990 tax returns.

At \$584,232, the Conservation Fund's Richard L. Erdmann, the group's executive vice president and general counsel, is the most highly paid official among the 15 organizations examined. Erdman received \$438,954 in salary and \$145,278 in "other compensation," according to the fund's return. All figures cited are taken from 2008 returns unless otherwise noted.

The second most highly compensated is Environmental Defense Fund President Frederic Krupp, who receives total compensation of \$496,174, including \$446,072 in salary and \$50,102 in other compensation.

Close behind Krupp among Big Green environmental movement executives is World Wildlife Fund President Carter Roberts, who was paid \$486,394, including a salary of \$439,327 and other compensation of \$47,067.

The median salary among all 15 of the highest-paid Big Green environmental officials is \$261,295, while the median total compensation for the 15 is \$308,465.

The 15 groups examined include the Conservation Fund, Environmental Defense Fund, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council, World Resources Institute, National Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, Resources for the Future, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Parks Conservation Association, Defenders of Wildlife, Earth Justice, and the Wilderness Society.

For comparison, Charity Navigator's current study of compensation in the nonprofit sector calculates that the median nonprofit CEO salary in the mid-Atlantic region, which includes Washington, D.C., is \$164,575.

For all environmental nonprofits nationwide, Charity Navigator said the median salary for the top executive is \$120,000.

In other words, the median salary for the top officials with these 15 groups is \$96,720 higher than the regional average for all nonprofits.

The disparity is even greater when compared with all nonprofits nationwide: median pay for Big Green CEOs is \$141,295 greater than the national median for nonprofit CEOs.

According to Charity Navigator, the highest Median salaries are paid to executives who work for education, arts, humanities and culture, and public benefit nonprofits, while the lowest salaries are paid to executives in nonprofits devoted to religion, animals and the environment.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the compensation received by executives at the top 15 environmental groups is the comparison with compensation levels received by executives of the conservative and libertarian nonprofits that most often oppose Big Green initiatives on Capitol Hill and in the media.

Opposition nonprofits analyzed by The Examiner included the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, Cato Institute, Concerned Women for America, Americans for Prosperity, Americans for Tax Reform, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Citizens Against Government Waste, National Taxpayers Union, and the American Conservative Union.

An *Examiner* analysis found a median salary of \$228,703 among the opposition groups, or nearly \$33,000 less than that received by the environmental executives. The gap is even wider when media total compensation figures are compared, with top executives at environmental opponents receiving \$254,605, or nearly \$54,000 less than the top 15 environmental executives.

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