The Go-Back Club

Newsbooklet of the Simple-Living Brigade: #28, February 2016

These are OUR stories: www.gobackclub.org

Our members live in 20 states, Washington D.C., two Canadian provinces, Korea and Nigeria.

From left to right: *The Delta 5 are Patrick Mazza, Mike LaPoint, Abby Brockway, Liz Spoerri and Jackie Minchew. They blocked a "bomb train" shipment of volatile Bakken crude from departing a Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail yard in Everett, Washington, just north of Seattle. (*Photo: Rising Tide Seattle)

No Jail Time for Delta 5

Historic Case That 'Welcomes Jurors to Climate Movement'

Activists who blockaded oil train in September 2014 will not face financial restitution claims or jail time.

By Nadia Prupis
Common Dreams: January 15, 2016

A jury in Washington State on Friday found that the defendants in the potentially groundbreaking "Delta 5" case, who in September 2014 blockaded an oil train in Everett and this week argued they were compelled to act over the threat of climate change, were not guilty of obstruction.

The defendants were found to be guilty of trespass, but will not face claims of financial harm to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway company after being cleared of the obstruction charges. They will also not face jail time.

According to Tim DeChristopher, a Seattle-based climate activist and co-founder of Peaceful Uprising, the jury said they understood the defendants were trying to raise public awareness to critical issues.

One juror reportedly told them, "Thanks for the education."

As Common Dreams reported on Tuesday, the historic case marks the first time a U.S. judge has allowed the "necessity defense" to be argued in a trial over a climate action—but on Thursday, Snohomish County Judge Anthony Howard instructed the jury not to consider the argument, "undercutting" the defendants' ability to defend themselves, as DeChristopher said at the time.

Still, Howard said, "Frankly the court is convinced that the defendants are far from the problem and are part of the solution to the problem of climate change," though he added that he was "bound by legal precedent, no matter what my personal beliefs might be."

In the end, the jury appeared to understand the activists' goals. On Twitter, one witness to the trial described a "beautiful, emotional conversation with jurors, convicted only where they felt compelled to."

In fact, jurors and defendants reportedly hugged after the decision came in, with one of the activists, Jackie Minchew, telling the panel, "Welcome to the movement."

Read what Patrick Mazzer says on page 3

What on Earth is The Go-Back Club?

A Simple-Living Brigade

Our Motto: ***Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.***

Founder/Editor: Iona Conner
Wire Editor: Allen Hengst
Contributors: Bill Boteler, Ekwe Chiwundu Charles, Mare Cromwell, Alanna Hartzok, Brendan Wissinger
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What is The Go-Back Club about?

We want to change people's hearts. Our members live simply (or try to) so that our collective carbon footprint grows smaller and smaller every day. We are working toward a common goal of reducing our individual impacts on climate change to protect future generations and all life.

Who are we trying to attract?

We hope to reach people who are concerned about global warming and realize that they are part of the problem but don't know what to do. We invite them to join our Club. Please tell your family and friends about us. They can go to www.gobackclub.org to see what we do.

What are we trying to achieve?

Our members are part of the global movement of people who know that global warming is an immediate threat and who want to prevent further harm and even reverse the situation.

We look to others for inspiration.

People are "like a blind man walking randomly toward a cliff. The only thing that will save him is to go backwards." Michael Mann (climate scientist and member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), to John and Iona Conner about climate tipping points on a visit to Penn State, where Mann is director of the Earth Systems Science Center

"Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify! Simplicity of life and elevation of purpose." Henry David Thoreau

Please send us your stories and photos. We rely on our members' contributions.

Fair Use Law: http://copyright.gov/fair-use/

Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses—such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship and research—as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of the following four factors in evaluating a question of fair use:

(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes: Courts look at how the party claiming fair use is using the copyrighted work and are more likely to find that nonprofit educational and noncommercial uses are fair. This does not mean, however, that all nonprofit education and noncommercial uses are fair and all commercial uses are not fair; instead, courts will balance the purpose and character of the use against the other factors below. Additionally, "transformative" uses are more likely to be considered fair. Transformative uses are those that add something new, with a further purpose or different character, and do not substitute for the original use of the work.

(2) Nature of the copyrighted work: This factor analyzes the degree to which the work that was used relates to copyright's purpose of encouraging creative expression. Thus, using a more creative or imaginative work (such as a novel, movie or song) is less likely to support a claim of a fair use than using a factual work (such as a technical article or news item). In addition, use of an unpublished work is less likely to be considered fair.

(3) Amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole: Under this factor, courts look at both the quantity and quality of the copyrighted material that was used. If the use includes a large portion of the copyrighted work, fair use is less likely to be found; if the use employs only a small amount of copyrighted material, fair use is more likely. That said, some courts have found use of an entire work to be fair under certain circumstances. And in other contexts, using even a small amount of a copyrighted work was determined not to be fair because the selection was an important part—or the "heart"—of the work.

(4) Effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work: Here, courts review whether, and to what extent, the unlicensed use harms the existing or future market for the copyright owner's original work. In assessing this factor, courts consider whether the use is hurting the current market for the original work (for example, by displacing sales of the original) and/or whether the use could cause substantial harm if it were to become widespread.

In addition to the above, other factors may also be considered by a court in weighing a fair use question, depending upon the circumstances. Courts evaluate fair use claims on a case-by-case basis and the outcome of any given case depends on a fact-specific inquiry. This means that there is no formula to ensure that a predetermined percentage or amount of a work—or specific number of words, lines, pages, copies—may be used without permission.

Please note that the Copyright Office is unable to provide specific legal advice to individual members of the public about questions of fair use. See 37 C.F.R. 201.2(a)(3).

Fair Use Logo

*For the very first time, U.S. climate activists have been able to argue the necessity defense—which argues that so-called criminal acts were committed out of necessity—to a jury. The Delta 5, who blockaded an oil train at the Delta rail yard near Seattle in September 2014, have been allowed to use the defense in a historic climate-change, civil disobedience trial. They said they acted to prevent the greater harm of climate change and oil train explosions. (*Caption from *The Guardian*: January 13, 2016; photo courtesy ClimateDisobedience.org*)*

Patrick Mazza: Why I Moved to Direct Action

By Patrick Mazza; posted by Jay O'Hara
ClimateDisobedience.org: December 15, 2015

Five individuals went to trial January 11th for blockading an oil train in Everett, Washington in September 2014. Patrick Mazza, along with Abby Brockway, Mike LaPointe, Jackie Minchew and Liz Spoerri are sharing their motivations and stories with us in the weeks leading up to the trial. They were preparing to use a necessity defense, arguing in court that their actions were necessary in the face of impending climate catastrophe. We at the Climate Disobedience Center are honored to be working with them and will be lifting up their voices. Here is Patrick's statement on his motivations for the action.

Since 1998 I have worked professionally advancing solutions to the climate crisis. I have spent a lot of time sitting in front of a computer trying to stop global warming. But after many years of seeing the climate crisis only worsen, it was time to sit in front of a train.

On September 2, 2014, along with four compatriots, I sat down before an oil train at Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Delta Yard in Everett, Washington.

I sat on the tracks because our world is going off the rails. We are seeing ever intensifying climate disruptions caused by the cloud of fossil fuel pollution thickening in the sky over us. In Washington State we are experiencing what a carbon-polluted, climate-disrupted world looks like.

Record drought and lung-choking wildfires, massive salmon kill in overheated rivers, powerful and sometimes unseasonal storms, ocean acidification killing the shellfish industry.

At the same time, the political system is blocked from responding in any meaningful way. Oil and coal companies have knowingly deceived the public about the magnitude of the climate threat and bought the politicians to stop action.

Over the years I have earnestly tried to work through the system. I have worked with power grid experts to help build a smart grid that can charge electric vehicles and connect millions of solar panels and wind turbines. I have been a strategic advisor to an electric vehicle company. I have worked to enact legislation and public policies that deploy sustainable fuels.

I continue to work on practical solutions. I won't quit. But compared to how fast climate disruption is coming on, solutions are not moving fast enough and we face catastrophic consequences. Ironically, the very place we sat at the BNSF yard on the Snohomish River Delta could be submerged under a rising Puget Sound by the end of the century.

Effort after effort to control climate-twisting fossil fuel pollution has failed, globally, nationally and in my own state. There came a point where I could no longer sit back and wait for the politicians to act. I had to put my body on the line to demand not talk, but action on a massive scale to rapidly replace fossil fuels. I know we can; I've worked on these solutions for years. If we care about our children, we will.

I am a parent myself. My day on the rails was the day before my daughter's 18th birthday, the last day before she became a full adult. By the time she's my age it will certainly be hotter, more storm tossed and troubled. She knows it too. A few years back

Patrick Mazza *continued on page 4*

Photo by Joe Brusky

Patrick Mazza *continued from page 3*

when I was sitting on the porch late on a sunny afternoon, she came up to me and asked, "Dad, is there hope for the world?"

That's the kind of question for which a parent needs a positive answer. When I sat down on the railroad track, I did my best to supply one.

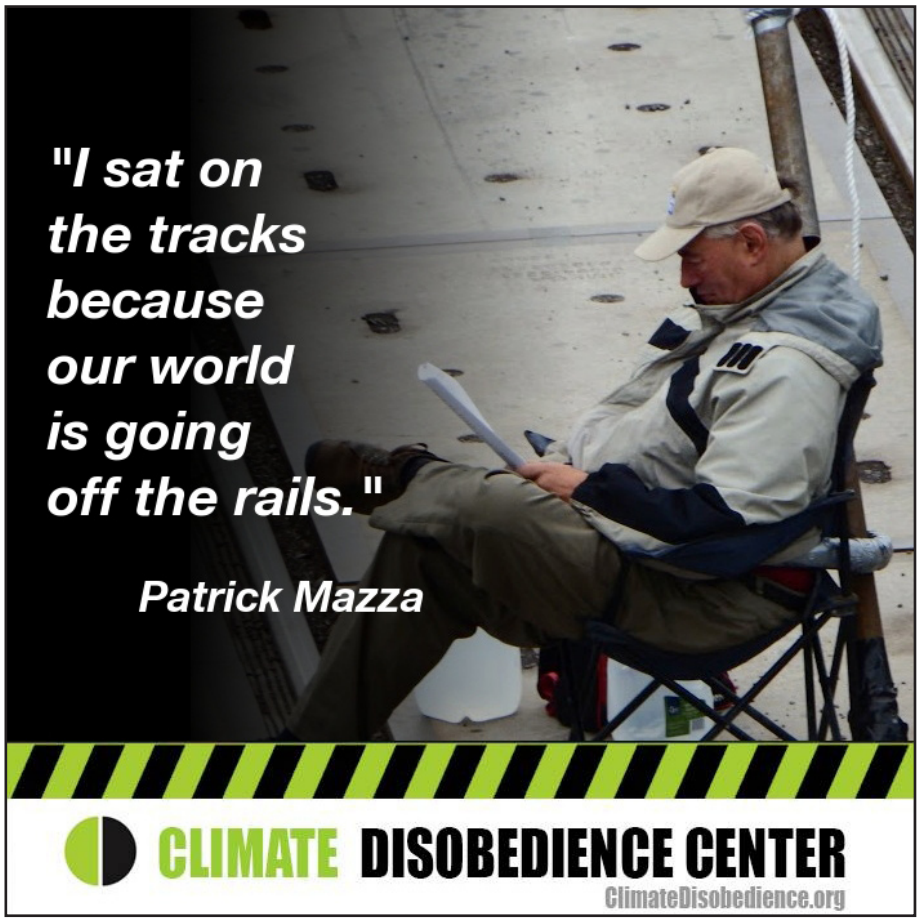
There is hope for her world and that of all our children but not if we stay within the bounds of a blocked and bought-off political system. I am done with lies and compromises that leave our world rapidly careening toward a global climate train wreck. I have to take direct action, to put my body in the way of business as usual, and say it is unacceptable to leave the world a wreckage for our children.

I hope many of the people with whom I have worked on solutions over the years will join me.

We owe our children's generation nothing less.

Photo courtesy ClimateDisobedience.org

Patrick Mazza says, "I am a parent myself. My day on the rails was the day before my daughter's 18th birthday, the last day before she became a full adult. By the time she's my age it will certainly be hotter, more storm tossed and troubled. She knows it, too. A few years back when I was sitting on the porch late on a sunny afternoon, she came up to me and asked, "Dad, is there hope for the world?" That's the kind of question for which a parent needs a positive answer. When I sat down on the railroad track, I did my best to supply one."



*Nigerian children hug the mosquito nets they received recently in Orlu on the outskirts of Owerri. The Milk Basket has arranged to deliver 45 nets on Valentine's Day to children in the Niger Delta. Hopes are high that more money will come in to purchase additional nets before then. (*Photo: Ekwe Chiwundu Charles*)*

Milk Basket/GBC Partnership:

Help Roll Back Malaria with Nets on Valentine's Day

By Ekwe Chiwundu Charles
Owerri, Nigeria

Valentine's Day, also known as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is a celebration observed on February 14th each year.

It is celebrated in many countries around the world, although it is not a public holiday in most of them. But it's not just the romantic kind of love; love can be expressed in numerous ways. It could be helping the poor, clothing the naked, giving alms to the homeless and so many other countless charity works.

The day was first associated with romantic love in the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer in the High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. In 18th-century England, it evolved into an occasion in which lovers expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards (known as "valentines").

In Europe, Saint Valentine's Keys are given to lovers "as a romantic symbol and an invitation to unlock the giver's heart", as well as to children, in order to ward off epilepsy (called Saint Valentine's Malady). Valentine's Day symbols that are used today include the heart-shaped outline, doves, and the figure of the winged Cupid. Since the 19th century, hand-written valentines have given way to mass-produced greeting cards.

It's Valentine's day coming up by February 14th and the Milk Basket is going to be showing love to kids in a creek community in Niger Delta.

We have only got 43 pieces of nets now but will surely need more nets to cover more communities.

You can help make a difference by just donating $10 to ensure a safe future for these children. Lets show love to someone, somewhere today.

Other donations like books, toys, milk and clothing items are highly welcome and will be most gratefully appreciated.

Thank you All.

Learn more at one of these sites about the Milk Basket and donate whatever you can spare to help buy more mosquito nets:

- https://www.facebook.com/Milk-Basket-1634451933482330/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel&__mref=message_bubble
- https://angel.co/milk-basket
- https://www.fundraise.com/ekwe-charles/milk-basket

Our Mission

Saving Lives
Clean Drinking Water
Adequate Nutrition
Roll Back Malaria

Building Futures
Education
Violence Prevention

U.S. District Judge Winmill Strikes Down Idaho's 'Ag-Gag' Law

Submitted by Allen Hengst, Wire Editor

By Zach Kyle and Cynthia Sewell, *excerpt*
Idaho Statesman: August 3, 2015

A federal judge ruled Monday that an Idaho law making it illegal to secretly film animal abuse at agricultural facilities violates the right to free speech.

"The effect of the statute will be to suppress speech by undercover investigators and whistleblowers concerning topics of great public importance: the safety of the public food supply, the safety of agricultural workers, the treatment and health of farm animals, and the impact of business activities on the environment," U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill stated in his August 3rd ruling.

Lawmakers in 2014 passed the statute—dubbed the 'Ag-Gag Law'—after Mercy for Animals (a Los Angeles-based, animal-rights group) released a video showing workers at Bettencourt Dairies in Hansen stomping, beating, dragging and abusing the cows.

A coalition of nonprofit groups sued, including the Animal Legal Defense Fund, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho and Center for Food Safety ...

Currently, seven states have ag-gag laws. Winmill's decision marks the first time a court has declared an ag-gag statute unconstitutional ...

Winmill noted in his ruling that undercover journalism and whistleblowing in Idaho contributed to public discourse in matters involving wolf hunting, family planning services and public school safety. "Such investigations into private matters, both by government and private actors, are recognized and embraced as important political speech in Idaho," he wrote.

FIVE-INGREDIENT SWEET POTATO, BLACK BEAN CHILI

Submitted by Len Frenkel
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Minimalist Baker via PETA

Are you surviving winter? Are you chilled to your bones?

Sometimes the only fix is some hot tea and a giant bowl of soup. Trust me, I know.

May I suggest warming up with this 5-ingredient, sweet potato, black bean chili?

I think it's just what we all need.

For as much soup and chili as I eat, I have no idea why I don't have more chili recipes on the blog! This had to change. Enter: Sweet potatoes and black beans married together in a hearty, savory-sweet chili.

The ingredients are things you likely have on hand right now.

- Onion
- Black Beans
- Sweet Potato
- Veggie Stock
- Salsa

That's it! Just 5.

I've also included a few optional spices to amp up the flavor, as well as a few topping ideas if you're into that (hand raised, very high). In a pinch this is the perfect, healthy weeknight meal or make-ahead dish to take for lunches throughout the week.

You all know I have a thing for sweet potatoes and black beans together and this soup marries them perfectly.

It's:

- Savory
- Naturally sweet
- Slightly smoky
- Soul warming
- Satifying
- Healthy
- & quick!

I made a batch and then froze several servings in mason jars to reheat throughout the week when I'm feeling particularly lazy (or cold). My favorite toppings include hot sauce, red onion, avocado and a few tortilla chips. Who am I kidding? All of the chips.

I hope you guys love this simple chili! If you try it, let us know in the comments or take a picture and tag it #minimalistbaker on Instagram! We'd love to see you.

Cheers!

Special Report for the GBC: Gas Leaks in Porter Ranch and D.C.

By Bill Boteler
Washington, D.C.: January 24, 2016

In 2012, a study in *Science* put forward the idea that cutting emissions of black carbon (soot) and methane could buy us time in our effort to slow climate change while we are trying to phase out fossil fuels. The study estimated that we could lower projected temperatures in midcentury by 0.5 degrees C. Methane can trap 84 times as much heat as CO_2 in the first 20 years after it enters the atmosphere. Sources include: coal mines, fossil fuel producers and landfills. Also, cattle production facilities and rice paddies contribute as biological sources.

Cutting methane emissions is also cheaper and easier than replacing fossil fuels, but sources are widespread and natural emission of methane will increase as climate change warms permafrost in Arctic regions.

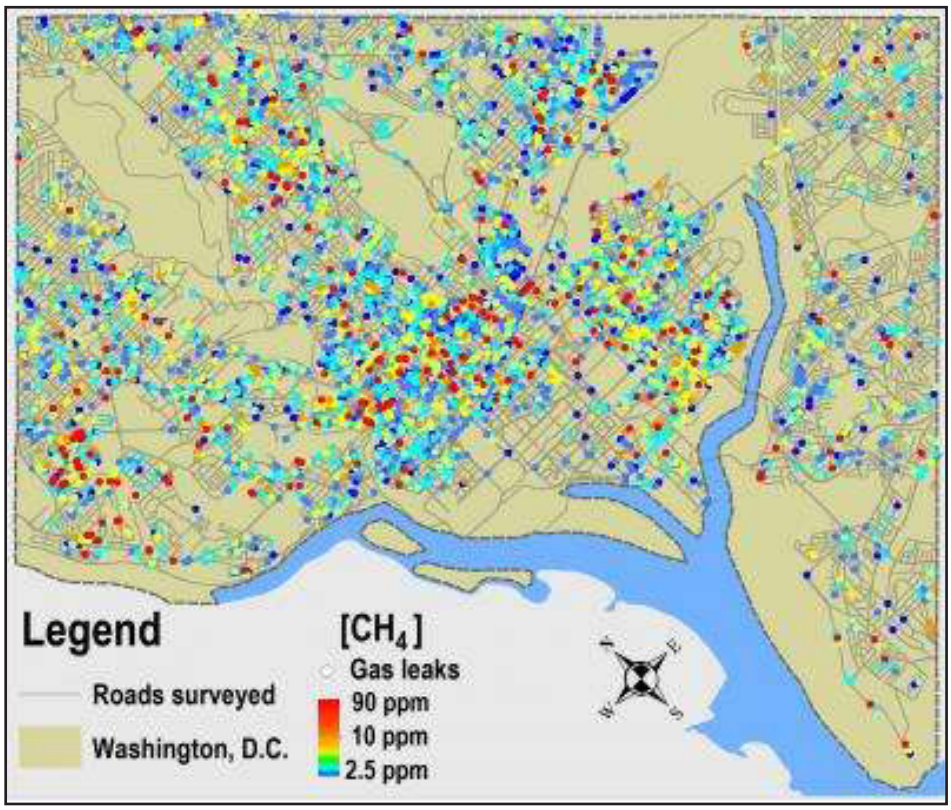
The current natural gas leak at Porter Ranch, California is a dramatic example of how serious methane leaks can be. Erin Brockovich has compared it to a BP oil spill on land. The leak was discovered at Southern California Gas Company's Aliso Canyon storage field in late October. This is an underground storage facility created by capping a former natural gas well. Since its discovery, the leak has spewed 84 million kilograms (185 million pounds) of methane. At its peak, it was leaking 58,000 kilograms (127,868 pounds) per hour but by Thursday this was down 2/3 to about 18,400 kilograms (40,565 pounds) per hour (*Source: LA Times*)

The amount is equivalent to the greenhouse effect of 440,000 cars over a one year period. That's two times the annual greenhouse emissions of Los Angeles. It's thought fracking may have played a role in creating the leak. (*Source: Counterpunch*)

Southern California Gas Company is digging a second well to reach and cap the leak which is 8,000 feet underground. But the leak probably won't be stopped until sometime in February. In the meantime, 26,000 families have fled from their homes to escape the foul-smelling gas. Many have suffered nosebleeds, headaches and respiratory distress.

Southern California Gas Company has had to pay Porter Ranch residents for temporary housing in area hotels and residents' lives have been turned upside down. Real estate values and small businesses have been adversely affected.

In response to the state of emergency that Governor Brown finally declared, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources has issued a notice to adopt emergency regulations for natural gas storage facilities that would require ongoing monitoring. There are 330 such facilities in California alone. But Linda Caputo, an activist with 350.org says the regulations need to be "much tougher". {*Source: Counterpunch*)



*This is a map of the District of Columbia showing where researchers found natural gas leaks under city streets, with colors indicating the concentration in parts per million of methane at each location. More than 5,893 leaks from aging natural gas pipelines have been found under the streets of Washington, D.C. by a research team from Duke University and Boston University. (*Credit: Duke University)

Leaky methane is a problem throughout the United States. As gas lines age, our older cities especially, are bleeding methane. A study released in 2014 by researchers from Duke and Boston Universities found 5,893 natural gas leaks in the District of Columbia alone.

Cars carrying special monitors and GPS equipment covered 1,500 miles of roads in Washington, D.C. They produced maps showing the locations of leaks. They also found leaks with high concentrations of methane and decided to probe beneath manholes where they detected leaking. Twelve of these had concentrations high enough to cause explosions. They reported these but, to their dismay, on returning four months later, found that nine of these were still emitting dangerous levels of gas. They also conducted a survey in Boston and found a similar number of leaks per mile. (*Source: USA Today*)

Older cities have pipes made of cast iron or steel that need replacing with newer PVC pipes. The Duke study recommended that other cities conduct gas-leak mapping.

Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts has introduced legislation to fund the replacement of leaking gas pipes nationwide. Also, President Obama has just proposed new rules to regulate the release and flaring of natural gas on public lands. (*Source: Oil and Gas Investor*)

It appears that after much pressure form activists and angry citizens, combined with new research findings, the government is finally clamping down on these sources of methane emissions.

It remains to be seen how this will affect fracking, which is a major source of methane leaks.

Bill also sent this note: Porter Ranch isn't the only leaking methane in America. Huge numbers if smaller leaks are contributing to climate change as well as local pollution and we need a national effort to fix these leaks since methane is 20 times more potent than CO_2.

Go-Back Club Members in Action

Pennsylvania Program Protects Additional 33 Farms: 2,652 Acres

The Daily News (Huntingdon), *excerpt*
December 17, 2015

High quality farmland in 18 counties in Pennsylvania will remain in agricultural production thanks to the state's Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

During a recent meeting, the board took action to safeguard 2,652 additional acres on 33 farms through the state's nation-leading farmland preservation program.

Since the program began in 1988, federal, state, county and local governments have invested more than $1.3 billion to preserve 516,417 acres on 4,892 farms in 57 counties for future agricultural production.

"Agriculture has been part of the fabric of this land since the days of Penn's Woods and the actions of the board today helped ensure that it will remain the cornerstone of our economy for generations to come," said state Agriclutur Secretary Russell Redding. "This investment in the finite, precious resource of farmland shows the state's commitment to a locally-grown food source that is instrumental in feeding a growing population."

The board preserved farms in 18 counties: Berks, Bradford, Bucks, Butler, Centre, Chester, Cumberland, Erie, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Tioga, Westmoreland and York.

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Eaement Purchase Program identifies properties and slows the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. It enables state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements, also called development rights, from owners of quailty farmland. ... .

Carbon Farming: To Sequester Carbon, Reverse Global Warming

Submitted by Alanna Hartzok
Pennsylvania

By Rob Wheeler
Global Ecovillage Network: December 11, 2015

Many ecovillage communities have been experimenting with different means of carbon farming and have gone well beyond carbon neutral to become net negative carbon communities. These villages provide many examples and best practices for sequestering billions of tons of carbon and reversing global warming.

While there's no question that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, over the last 25 years emissions have actually accelerated. In 2013, there was roughly 50 parts per million (ppm) more carbon pollution in the atmosphere than in 1988. While we have to replace fossil fuels with renewables, other measures are needed as well.

The alternative we propose is to net sequester—go beyond zero—at the home, village and regional scale. We have many tools for accomplishing this in everything from clothing to buildings—carbon farming, agroforestry, ecosystem restoration, and biochar.

Humanity has actually released far more carbon to the atmosphere from soil disruption, desertification and deforestation since the beginning of agriculture than from fossil fuels. So now we have the opportunity to reverse the process and rebuild and sequester megatons of carbon in our soils.

The safest and most effective approach is to capture it with millions of species of green plants, animals, insects, fungi and micro-organisms, burying it deep in soils in carbon-rich molecules that are stable for centuries or longer. And because complex organic carbon molecules retain many times their weight in water, we can also restore vibrant life to billions of acres of parched, desertified areas that were once healthy forests or grasslands.

Unfortunately, most of these carbon farming practices and techniques are not yet a part of the mainstream climate discussion. It is unspeakably ironic that the most effective, most beneficial, least risky and least expensive approach to reversing global warming is not yet on the table.

As years pass without strong global action on climate, the threat of the Earth's temperatures rising by more than 2°C has become increasingly likely and alarming. The 'emissions gap' between what our governments are willing to do and what is required is estimated to reach 8 to 10 billion tons of CO_2 in 2020 and 14 to 17 billion tons in 2030.

An article on the Global Ecovillage Network COP21 web site by Hans-Peter Schmidt entitled "Humus or Famine" states that deforestation and degradation release an estimated 4.3 to 5.5 Gigatons of CO_2 equivalent (Gt CO_2eq) per year, with agriculture producing 5.0 to 5.8 billion metric tons more. We have lost between 55 and 320 billion tons of carbon or roughly 25 per cent to 75 per cent of the original humus content.

Healthy soil has humus levels between 3.5 per cent and 6 per cent. Our more intensively used soils are 2 per cent or below. But when the Europeans arrived in the Amazon River basin centuries ago, the native peoples had built the Terra Preta soils to 10-15 per cent, resulting in incredibly rich farming communities, in a region with naturally low carbon soils.

We can achieve the same by closing organic cycles, applying organic matter (composts, green manure and mulch), mixed cropping, continuous soil cover, minimizing tillage and applying biochar to our fields.

By increasing the carbon content of the soil to just 10 per cent worldwide over the next 100 years we could sequester the equivalent of 900 billion tons of CO_2, reducing CO_2 by 110 ppm in the atmosphere, thus returning to pre-industrial levels.

In another article on the GEN COP21 web site, Albert Bates states, "We could sequester 1 gigaton of carbon annually by switching to carbon farming. And with biochar, increase this to 4 to 10 GtC per year using biomass-to-energy pyrolysis reactors." And then add tree planting, wetland restoration and bamboo stands. Reforestation, particularly at the edges of deserts, provides the largest available wedge to combat climate change, potentially contributing 80 GtC per year.

These things are not only do-able but are already being done in ecovillages around the world. We can sequester more greenhouse gases than we emit. We can go back to pre-industrial carbon levels while restoring ecosystem health and replenishing our depleted soils. All we have to do is plant trees, build terra preta soils and organically store carbon in our planet's terrasphere as did indigenous peoples of South America centuries ago.

More Information: You can read about Global Ecovillage Network success stories at: www.ecovillage.org/COP21/.

Contact: rob.wheeler@ecovillage.org.

The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.

Wendell Berry

Celebrating a Big Year for the Ocean

By Janis Searles Jones
oceanconservancy.org: January 14, 2016

This has been a landmark year for the ocean. The tireless work of ocean advocates—like you—has resulted in a series of victories moving us towards a cleaner, healthier ocean for the communities and animals that depend on it. Here at Ocean Conservancy, we've had quite a busy year and we're proud to have played our part in working towards a better ocean.

Please join me in celebrating a few of the successes we've had over the past year.

We engaged communities to take action on ocean acidification.

Important species like oysters and crabs that fuel the nation's seafood industry are at risk due to the increasing acidity of seawater. Ocean Conservancy's Ocean Acidification team led the drive to introduce two new bipartisan federal bills to tackle this serious challenge and we garnered support for additional federal funds for research and monitoring. We also co-authored papers in several science journals to raise awareness of this growing threat to coastal communities and were pleased to see coastal states promoting legislation to combat this massive problem.

We made progress on smart ocean planning.

Our Ocean Planning program protects marine ecosystems while balancing ocean uses like shipping, fishing and recreation. Five years ago, ocean planning in the U.S. was a long-sought dream; today we are months away from ocean plans for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. We also celebrated construction of Deepwater Wind, the country's first offshore wind farm located in Rhode Island, which we've showcased as a model of sustainable development, supported by fishermen and conservationists. We, along with industry and conservation partners, are working to make smart ocean planning the new status quo for how our ocean is managed and protected.

We helped keep risky offshore drilling out of the U.S. Arctic Ocean.

This year, President Obama protected nearly 10 million acres of important habitat off Alaska's coast. Shell retreated from offshore oil exploration in the Chukchi Sea and the Administration cancelled two Arctic offshore lease sales. These decisions are huge victories for all of those—including Ocean Conservancy—that continually pressed for protections from risky development. Still, our work is not done. Although drilling is no longer imminent, Shell has signaled continued interest in the region and the Administration is still considering new leases. In the coming year, we will continue our fight against future drilling and for a more resilient Arctic marine ecosystem.

We redoubled our efforts to restore the Gulf of Mexico following the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster.

In the years after the BP disaster polluted

Oceans *continued on next page*

VICTORY! Microbeads Banned in U.S.

Ocean Conservancy
Email received January 11, 2016

2016 has barely started and we can already share a huge win for our ocean. Thanks to the support of ocean advocates like you, Congress has backed a bill banning the use of microbeads in personal care products. And just last week, President Obama signed this bill into law.

Microbeads might be tiny, but this legislation is huge. The new law means companies will phase out the sale of products containing microbeads over the next two years, and stop making personal care products with microbeads altogether by July 1, 2017.

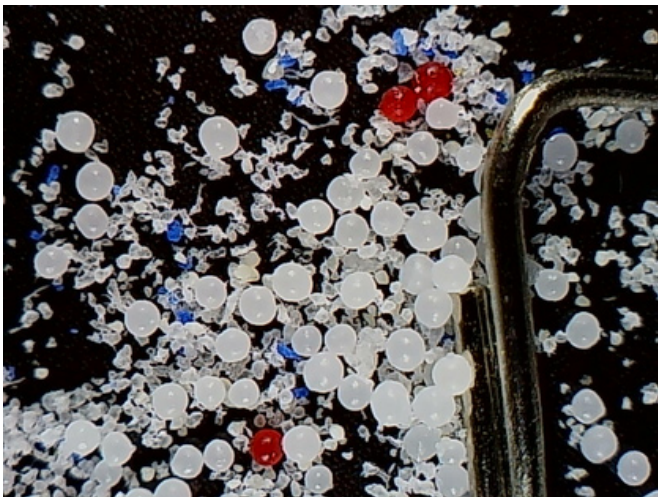
These small plastic particles have been a staple ingredient in everyday products we use like body washes, facial scrubs and toothpastes. Since they're too small to be filtered out by water treatment plants, they flow straight from our sinks to the ocean and into the mouths and gills of sea creatures around the world.

The ban on microbeads is a big step towards stopping plastics from entering our ocean.

This new legislation shows a growing bipartisan dedication of lawmakers to create a more sustainable ocean—a mission we can all get behind. We are proud of those who served as a voice for our ocean in Congress and we hope this is just the start of more ocean legislation to come.

Thank you for your support. Here's to many more ocean victories in 2016!

For the Ocean,
Nicholas Mallos
Director, Trash Free Seas



*Size, shape and colour variations of microbeads. A standard paperclip is shown for size comparison with microscope at 65x magnification. (*Photo courtesy Plastic Free Seas*)*

Scientific Evidence Supports a Ban on Microbeads

Society for Conservation Biology web site

Growing scientific evidence indicates that synthetic plastic microbeads (hereafter, microbeads) are a threat to the environment and should be banned from all personal care products. Microbeads pollute the environment, adding to the increasing abundance of microplastic debris. Too small to be efficiently filtered by wastewater treatment processes, microbeads are found in aquatic habitats and fish. Microplastic debris, and its inherent cocktail of chemical pollutants, has been found in the stomachs of hundreds of species of wildlife. The ingestion of microplastic may cause bioaccumulation of hazardous chemicals and adverse health effects in wildlife and people.

Background on the Bead

Microbeads are a form of microplastic. Thus, scientific evidence related to the sources, fate and effects of microplastic inform our understanding of microbeads.

In particular, microbeads are fragments or beads of plastic, ranging from roughly 5µm to 1mm in size and do not biodegrade in nature. Microbeads are used in hundreds of products including cosmetics, sunscreen, body wash, toothpaste, skincare and industrial and household cleaning products.

They are used for several reasons, including as cleansing materials or exfoliants (often replacing naturally-biodegradable alternatives), in cosmetics to hide wrinkle lines and to improve the feel of formulated products such as lotions.

What's the problem?

Microbeads are found in aquatic habitats and in wildlife adding to the growing quantities of microplastic debris. Microbeads, like all microplastic, have the potential to contaminate food chains, including seafood products consumed by people. Microbeads in personal care products are designed to be discarded down the drain during normal use. Due to their small size, it is not feasible for wastewater treatment plants to screen microbeads, which are then littered via final effluent or sewage sludge into the environment.

For a list of products that don't contain microbeads go to http://beatthemicrobead.org/images/pdf/greenUK.pdf

Oceans *continued from previous page*

the Gulf with nearly five million barrels of oil, damage to fishing communities and marine wildlife continues to emerge. Roughly 4 to 8 billion oysters were lost and bottlenose dolphins are expected to take 40-50 years to recover. The historic $20.8 billion settlement announced this year will help us address spill impacts and achieve long-term restoration goals. The inclusion of over $1 billion for ocean restoration—as well as separate funds to monitor long-term spill effects—were major victories. Ocean Conservancy remains steadfast in ensuring that every dime of funding is directed as intended.

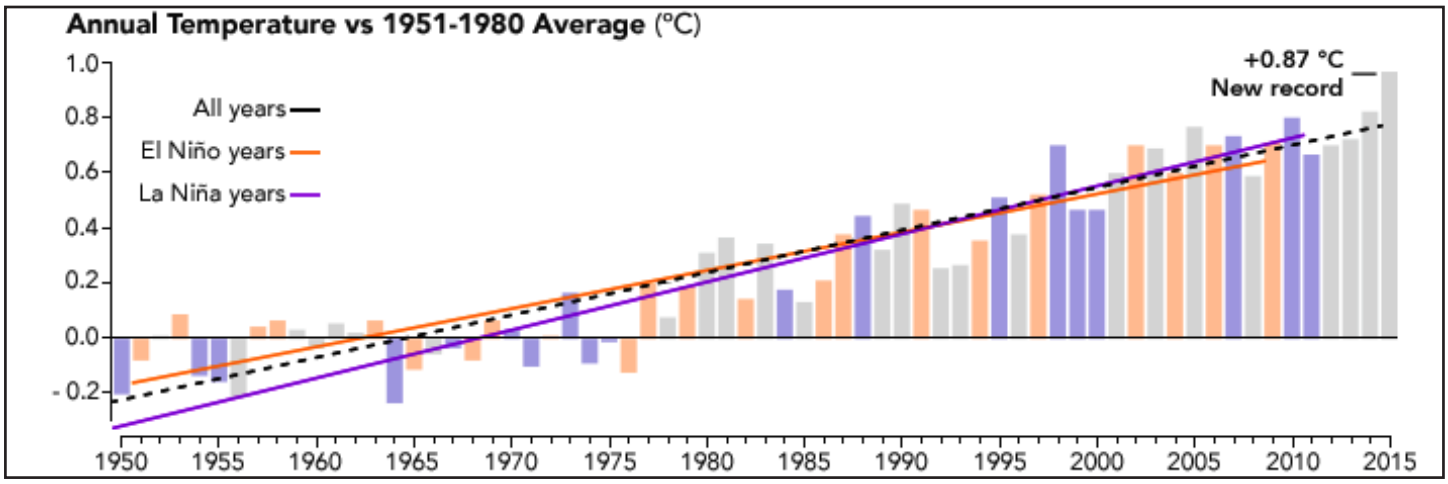
We led the way in tackling ocean plastics.

This year we were thrilled to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the International Coastal Cleanup. Thanks to millions of volunteers, we have protected marine wildlife by removing more than 200 million pounds of trash from beaches and waterways over the last three decades.

We are also leading a growing coalition of influential partners through the Trash-Free Seas Alliance to keep trash and plastics from entering the ocean in the first place. With our Alliance partners we released a first-of-its-kind report, Stemming the Tide, which outlines specific solutions to reduce the amount of plastic waste flowing into the ocean by 45 percent.

We are proud to reflect on everything our teams and our supporters have accomplished this year. These successes are your successes.

We are also excited for all of the progress we can make in 2016—we're ready to continue to make strides towards a healthier, more sustainable ocean.



Graph of temperature trends in relation to El Niño and La Niña events. Orange bars represent global temperature anomalies in El Niño years, with the orange line showing the trend. Purple bars depict La Niña years, and the purple line shows that trend. Neutral years are shown in gray, and the dashed black line shows the overall temperature trend since 1950. (Credit: NASA/GSFC/Earth Observatory)

2015: Record-Shattering Global Warm Temperatures

Submitted by John Conner, Pennsylvania and Kim Stenley, Maryland

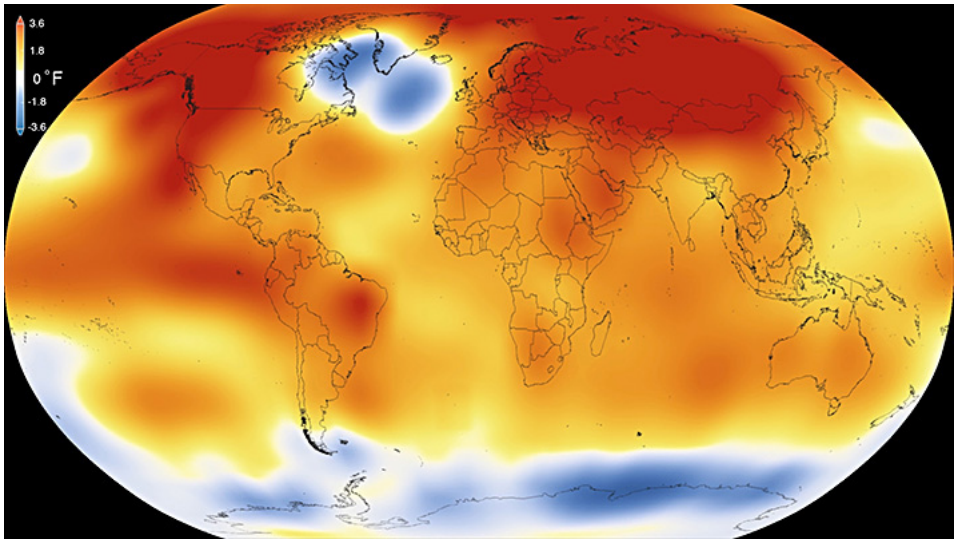
realclimate.org: January 21, 2016 (*excerpt*)

Earth's 2015 surface temperatures were the warmest since modern record keeping began in 1880, according to independent analyses by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Globally-averaged temperatures in 2015 shattered the previous mark set in 2014 by 0.23 degrees Fahrenheit (0.13 Celsius). Only once before, in 1998, has the new record been greater than the old record by this much.

The 2015 temperatures continue a long-term warming trend, according to analyses by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York (GISTEMP). NOAA scientists agreed with the finding that 2015 was the warmest year on record based on separate, independent analyses of the data. Because weather station locations and measurements change over time, there is some uncertainty in the individual values in the GISTEMP index. Taking this into account, NASA analysis estimates 2015 was the warmest year with 94 percent certainty.

"Climate change is the challenge of our generation, and NASA's vital work on this important issue affects every person on Earth," said NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. "Today's announcement not only underscores how critical NASA's Earth observation program is, it is a key data point that should make policy makers stand up and take notice—now is the time to act on climate."



2015 was the warmest year since modern record-keeping began in 1880, according to a new analysis by NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. The record-breaking year continues a long-term warming trend—15 of the 16 warmest years on record have now occurred since 2001. (Credit: NSA/GSFC/Scientific Visualization Studio)

The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1.0 degree Celsius) since the late-19th century, a change largely driven by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere.

Most of the warming occurred in the past 35 years, with 15 of the 16 warmest years on record occurring since 2001. Last year was the first time the global average temperatures were 1 degree Celsius or more above the 1880-1899 average.

Phenomena such as El Niño or La Niña, which warm or cool the tropical Pacific Ocean, can contribute to short-term variations in global average temperature. A warming El Niño was in effect for most of 2015.

"2015 was remarkable even in the context of the ongoing El Niño," said GISS Director Gavin Schmidt. "Last year's temperatures had an assist from El Niño, but it is the cumulative effect of the long-term trend that has resulted in the record warming that we are seeing."

Weather dynamics often affect regional temperatures, so not every region on Earth experienced record average temperatures last year. For example, NASA and NOAA found that the 2015 annual mean temperature for the contiguous 48 United States was the second warmest on record.

NASA's analyses incorporate surface temperature measurements from 6,300 weather stations, ship- and buoy-based observations

2015 ***continued on next page***

2015 *continued from previous page*

of sea surface temperatures, and temperature measurements from Antarctic research stations. These raw measurements are analyzed using an algorithm that considers the varied spacing of temperature stations around the globe and urban heating effects that could skew the conclusions if left unaccounted for. The result is an estimate of the global average temperature difference from a baseline period of 1951 to 1980.

NOAA scientists used much of the same raw temperature data, but a different baseline period, and different methods to analyze Earth's polar regions and global temperatures.

GISS is a NASA laboratory managed by the Earth Sciences Division of the agency's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. The laboratory is affiliated with Columbia University's Earth Institute and School of Engineering and Applied Science in New York.

NASA monitors Earth's vital signs from land, air and space with a fleet of satellites, as well as airborne and ground-based observation campaigns. The agency develops new ways to observe and study Earth's interconnected natural systems with long-term data records and computer analysis tools to better see how our planet is changing. NASA shares this unique knowledge with the global community and works with institutions in the United States and around the world that contribute to understanding and protecting our home planet.

The full 2015 surface temperature data set and the complete methodology used to make the temperature calculations are available at data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/

Related Links

•NASA-NOAA joint news conference: audio and slides (PDF)

•NOAA's summary of 2015 temperature

•NASA, NOAA Administrators' joint blog post on 2015 temperatures

•Comments by Dr. James Hansen of Columbia University: Global Temperature in 2015 (PDF)

•*NASA News*: 2014 Temperature Summation

This article was originally prepared as NASA News Release 16-008.

Conservationists Challenge Helicopter Intrusions in Premiere Wilderness Area

Earthjustice Press Release: January 7, 2016

Last evening, Earthjustice, on behalf of Wilderness Watch, Friends of the Clearwater and Western Watersheds Project, filed a complaint in federal court to stop the Idaho Department of Fish and Game from conducting a major helicopter-supported elk capturing and collaring project in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RORNW) in central Idaho. The FC-RONRW is the largest contiguous Wilderness in the National Forest System and the largest outside Alaska.

The project represents the most significant motorized intrusion ever approved within a national forest Wilderness, where motorized access is generally banned. The project is being conducted as part of the State of Idaho's egregious plans to eventually kill more than half of the wolves in the FC-RONRW in order to manage the area as a game farm.

POCATELLO, Idaho—A coalition of conservationists, represented by Earthjustice, today filed a legal challenge to the decision by the U.S. Forest Service to allow the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to conduct approximately 120 helicopter landings in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness as part of a program to manipulate wildlife populations in the wilderness.

At issue is the Forest Service's January 6, 2016 decision to issue a permit allowing IDFG to land helicopters in the River of No Return through the end of March to capture and place radio telemetry collars on wild elk. The federal Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized vehicles including helicopters in wilderness areas.

The helicopter operations permitted by the Forest Service are part of IDFG's broader program to inflate elk numbers above natural levels within the wilderness by eliminating wolf packs that prey on the elk. IDFG's existing elk and predator management plans call for exterminating the majority of wolves in the heart of the River of No Return to provide more elk for hunters and commercial outfitters in an area that receives some of the lightest hunting use in the state.

"A wilderness is supposed to be a refuge from the noise and disturbance of motorized vehicles, not a helicopter landing zone," said Earthjustice attorney Tim Preso. "This motorized intrusion on one of our premiere wild areas is made all the worse by the fact that the Forest Service has allowed the state to turn natural wolf predation on elk into a reason to degrade the wilderness with helicopter landings."

Earthjustice is representing Wilderness Watch, Friends of the Clearwater and Western Watersheds Project in challenging the Forest Service's decision. The groups seek a court order to prevent the helicopter intrusions on the River of No Return.

"This proposal violates everything that makes Wilderness unique," said Wilderness Watch executive director George Nickas. "It's an unprecedented intrusion with helicopters for the sole purpose to make wildlife populations in Wilderness conform to the desires of managers rather than accept and learn from the ebb and flow of nature."

Gary Macfarlane of Friends of the Clearwater added, "Wilderness, by law, is in contrast to areas that are heavily manipulated. This proposal to capture elk with net guns from helicopters is heavy-handed manipulation and denigrates the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness."

"The Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness wasn't ideal elk habitat until predators like wolves and grizzlies were eradicated," said Ken Cole, Western Watersheds Project's Idaho Director. "Now, the IDFG wants to continue manipulating this area and turn one of the nation's premier wilderness areas into a game farm for outfitters and their wealthy clients."

At 2.4-million acres, the River of No Return is the largest contiguous unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System in the Lower 48 and hosts abundant wildlife including elk, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, wolves, cougars and wolverines. It is one of the few public-land wilderness areas of sufficient size to allow natural wildlife interactions to play out without human interference and for this reason was one of the original wolf reintroduction sites in the Northern Rockies.

Why Was It So Warm This Christmas (in Pennsylvania)?

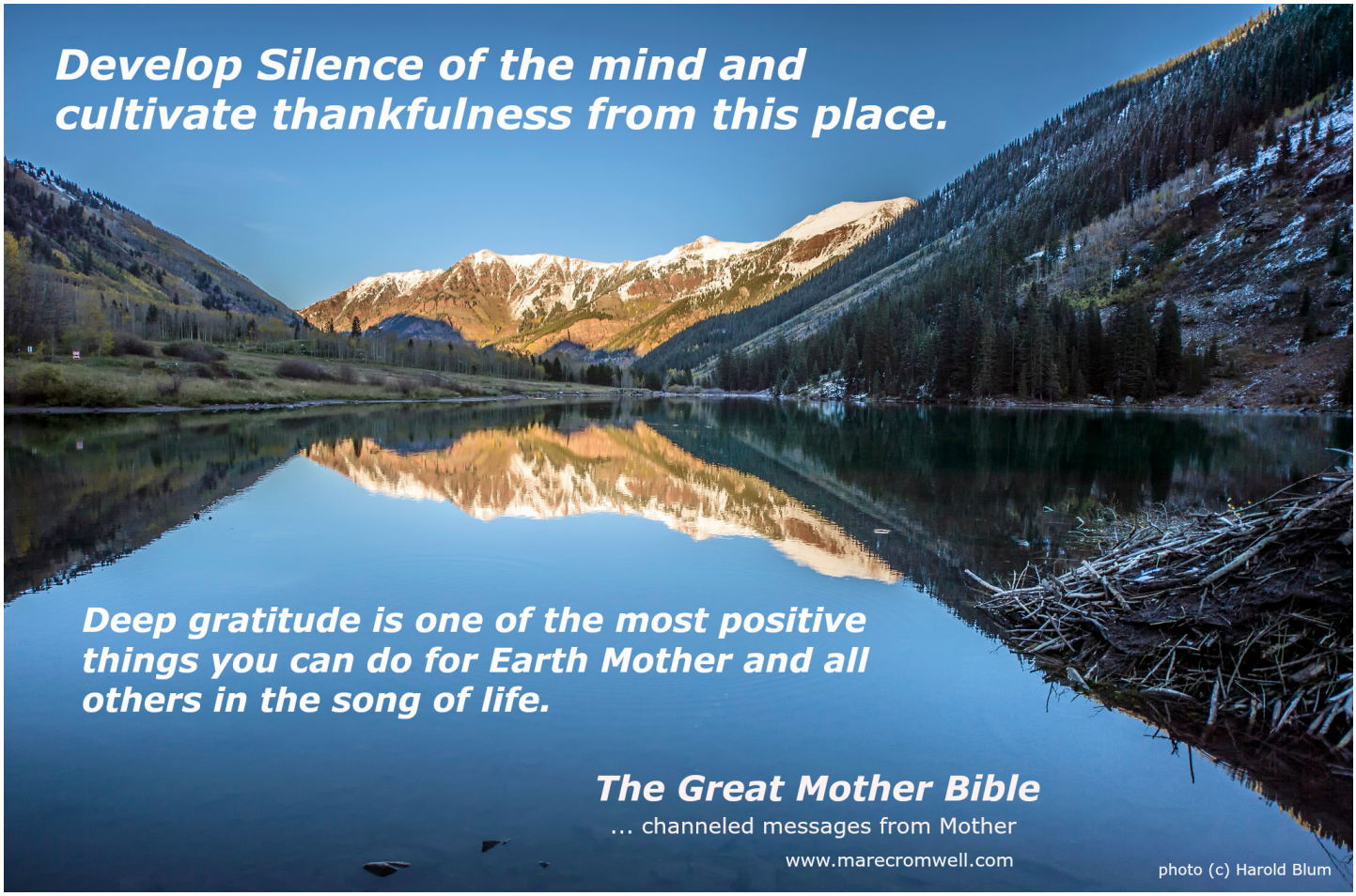
By Brendan Wissinger (14), Pennsylvania

I like warm weather but not on Christmas and I don't like everything that has to come with it like low salt density, more and worse heat waves, more and worse drought, more and worse wildfires, more and worse storms (including winter storms in some places), ice caps and glaciers melting, more and worse disease, sea-level rise, less biodiversity and ecosystems, more and worse flooding, smog, more and worse war (by the way that hasn't taken into effect yet), more and worse famine, more pollen.

Why was it so warm this Christmas?

Two Reasons: El Niño and Climate Change. El Niño is an event that makes the Pacfic basin and areas around it warmer. It causes large storms from Alaska down to Chile so it is Warm and Wet, and areas like Australia and New Zealand and Indonesia and China and Japan and Russia are warm and dry, which causes severe droughts. It doesn't do it every year. But when it does happen it runs from late November into January or February.

This has been the worst El Niño since they started recording El Niños. Climate isn't the same as weather by the way.



A Study in Contrasts

Declare War on Police Brutality

Mirrors Brought to Protests: Police Forced to Look at What They've Become

Filmingcops.com via positivenewsus.org: January 6, 2016

UKRAINE — In a move that is picking up international attention, the people of Ukraine have begun bringing mirrors to their protests.

They say they're doing it to force police to look at their own reflections, in a piercing psychological reminder of what they've turned into.

The idea came about after police were seen violently attacking hundreds of Ukrainians who are upset with their government.

As news about the mirrors continues to spread online, it is sure to become a trend in protests around the world, with commenters saying things like, "That is the most beautiful and brilliant form of protest I have heard of in a long time."

"Our planet is hotter. The seas are rising. Our communities are facing the reality that we may have to move; we have winter wildfires happening in the Arctic. We are out of time. Any solutions that do not talk about cutting emissions at the source or keeping fossil fuels in the ground are false solutions. We don't have time to talk about carbon markets, carbon trading, REDD+ projects. We must act now." – Dallas Goldtooth, Dakota/Dine, Campaigner with Indigenous Environmental Network. (Photo: Indigenous Rising)

What You Need to Know About Paris Climate Agreement

Submitted by Allen Hengst, Wire Editor

"The seas are rising, our communities have nowhere else to go."

Sina Brown-Davis, Maori activist

By Ben Adler
Grist.org: December 12, 2015

PARIS, France—The Paris Agreement to address climate change, adopted on Saturday, will be remembered as a big step forward and at the same time a frustrating set of compromises and omissions.

The COP21 conference brought every country to the table; they all accepted the science of climate change and they agreed to work together to do something about it. But some proved more ambitious than others and the rich countries didn't come up with enough money to get the best deal possible.

The bottom line is that the agreement gets us far closer to containing climate change than we were two weeks ago but still far short of where we need to go. In fact, we won't even know for years what it will accomplish. How much the agreement reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and through that reduces warming, will depend on whether countries meet their targets for curbing emissions and deploying renewable energy and whether they ramp up their ambition in the years ahead.

In terms of climate justice, there is even less to cheer. Rich countries like the U.S., Canada and the European Union upped their pledges for climate finance slightly but nowhere near enough to compensate for the hugely outsized share of the global carbon budget they have devoured.

Still, the Paris Agreement builds the architecture for greater progress in the next decade. Here is your guide to the basics of what the deal does, what it contains, and what it doesn't:

So what does it do? The Paris Agreement commits 196 countries to work together to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with a stretch goal of keeping below 1.5 C. It also calls for stopping the rise of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.

Before the Paris conference began, each country submitted an action pledge, known as an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), laying out what it will do to curb emissions, increase renewable energy and/or reduce deforestation.

The pledges vary wildly. And there are two very, very big loopholes: The INDC commitments are voluntary, which means there is no penalty for failing to meet them. And, even if they are met, they will not put the world on a path to less than 2 C of warming.

Paris *continued on next page*

Paris *Continued from page 16*

Under the most optimistic assumptions, the INDCs still set us on a path to 2.7 to 3.5 C of warming. That's why climate experts like Joe Romm of Think Progress say they are merely buying us more time to take real action. But that's better than just heading straight off the cliff.

The good news is that the agreement includes a process for strengthening INDCs. In 2018, countries will take stock of their progress on meeting their pledges, and by 2020 they will have to produce new INDCs.

They could simply restate the same goals but the hope is that they will go further as the problem grows more urgent, the political movement for climate action becomes more powerful and clean technology gets cheaper and more widespread.

President Obama, who worked hard for success in Paris, argues that countries will find—as the U.S. has since he took office—that once you start down the path of expanding renewable energy, it's easier than expected. That's why the U.S. and its allies in the negotiations made this their top request.

The Paris Agreement is not a treaty and countries' INDCs are not binding. (The Obama administration made sure of this so it wouldn't have to submit the deal to the U.S. Senate for approval.) Still, the deal contains some binding elements, such as requiring countries to participate in a system for measuring their progress on achieving their goals.

What made it into the deal?

•**Everyone is involved.** Previous agreements put all the responsibility for reducing emissions on rich countries. In the Paris Agreement, all 196 signatories agreed that every country must take action, while acknowledging that richer countries should start immediately and cut emissions more steeply, while poorer countries' contributions will depend on their individual situations.

•**A "ratchet mechanism."** This is the technical term for the agreement to submit new pledges by 2020. It's the most important victory within the agreement, as many large developing nations, like India and Indonesia, were reluctant to agree to a system that would pressure them to up their ambition within the next decade. Most INDCs set goals through 2030 but, if we don't improve upon them, it will be impossible to stay below 1.5 C and almost impossible to stay below 2 C. The ratchet mechanism requires countries to return to the table in 2020 and spell out their plans for 2025 to 2030. This creates the opportunity for the world to potentially put itself on a course to stay below 2 C but we won't know the outcome until 2020 and beyond.

•**Small increases in climate finance, including adaptation aid.** It was clear from the first day of the conference, as heads of state spoke, that for many developing countries experiencing the effects of climate change, increased aid for adaptation was a top priority. Thus far, most climate finance has been for reducing emissions. And, overall, rich nations have fallen far short of the 2009 goal of providing $100 billion in climate finance per year by 2020. Developed countries—the most generous being Germany, France, the U.K. and the European Union as a whole—made new pledges of several billion dollars each while in Paris. That mostly isn't earmarked specifically for adaptation, but some of it is. And Secretary of State John Kerry, in an effort to give the negotiations a boost and show developing nations that the U.S. is listening to their concerns, announced that the U.S. would double its adaptation aid from $400 million to $800 million over five years. That may have helped get a final agreement but it's still a pittance in the context of the U.S. economy, its budget and its massive historical climate debt.

•**Richer developing countries have started contributing to climate finance.** Under the original U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, a specific set of developed nations—those who were rich in 1992, when it was first negotiated—were given the general responsibility of paying for climate change mitigation and everyone else was exempted. But some countries left out, like China, Singapore and South Korea, have enjoyed dramatic economic growth since then. Others, such as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, are fabulously wealthy and the worst carbon emitters per capita.

Meanwhile, we've seen economic collapse and a consequent drop in emissions in former Soviet states in Eastern Europe. It's silly to say they must pay but richer countries in the Middle East and Asia shouldn't. At COP21, richer developing nations, in particular China, refused to accept formal responsibility to contribute but they agreed to do it on a voluntary basis. In fact, China committed $3.1 billion to climate finance between now and 2020, slightly more than the U.S.'s commitment of $3 billion.

•**Loss and Damage, sort of.** When developed countries pledged in 2009 to come up with $100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020, they had two purposes in mind: reducing and preventing emissions and preparing for the effects of existing and inevitable warming. But as the devastating effects of rising seas and extreme weather have become more visible, developing countries have demanded a third form of assistance: "Loss and Damage."

They and their allies in global aid and environmental organizations pushed hard in Paris for a separate section of the agreement dealing with Loss and Damage. They got one, but it did not put rich countries on the hook for past or future climate change-related destruction in poorer countries. In fact, it explicitly states the opposite, saying, "The Agreement does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation." (The liability argument would be that countries that have grown rich from burning fossil fuels are legally responsible for the effects of climate change.) Instead it merely directs a task force to "develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change."

•**Ambitious abstract goals.** As the Copenhagen Accord did in 2009, the Paris Agreement includes the goal of keeping warming below 2 degrees C. But at the behest of the most vulnerable countries, such as the small island states, it also goes further, calling for efforts to stay below 1.5 C. It even requests that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change produce a report on how we could stay below 1.5 C. But this is all merely theoretical at this point, since

Paris *Continued on page 21*

Iona's Memoir: How on Earth Did I Become a Pacifist Activist?

Heart Leads, I Follow

By Iona (aka Susan Wynne Norris Hnatt Topf Conner)

First Reviews

Your book has many touching stories inside. It's not only a book, it's an inspirational body. You are absolutely unique and you have made a lot of sacrifices and I still wonder why you did them.
ECC, Nigeria

Happily, I got your book today. I started it tonight and can't put it down. I am enjoying your light-hearted writing style.

Mostly I wanted to touch base and say I totally forgot your mom had MS as my mother did and we both had more responsibility at a very early age. I was ironing my own clothes at 9 or 10. I also didn't remember that you were a member of the DAR. My mother was and I'm going to join. I've talked about it long enough and you've put it front and center. So I'm doing it!! It's such an honor, even if it ends with Jackie — if she even wants to join.

Best of luck with your book and I'm sure many will find it as interesting as I do. I finished it and thoroughly enjoyed it. I had no idea all the unique things you did as an activist and your amazing travels. Wow. I loved it and all the pictures. Thank goodness there are people like you in this world!!
BB, New Jersey

Your book arrived today and I started reading it. I love the comments that Matt sent on the salute to the flag. It will be great fun to read the entire story. The photos are wonderful. I have been reading your memoir and enjoying it greatly. Only on about page 70 or so.

I loved the story about your solo novice canoe ride. Also your solo bike ride through the Pine Barrens.

Now I'm reading about your stay on a kibbutz in Israel. I just read a bit every day, kind of a slow reader but enjoy every page.

What a masterpiece — I admire your energy to put this together.
TM, Virginia

I started reading your book last night and am enjoying it. Your family history and struggle with weight gain is interesting and keeps me reading. I knew someone in school that gained a lot of weight too after her parents divorced and it became a lifelong challenge. The pictures are great! You and Joanie were so adorable and look very much alike.
GDS, Vermont

I've been enjoying your book. So many of your growing up experiences mirror mine!
GN, Pennsylvania

Excellent book! Please keep up GBC!
Very best,
SC, Pennsylvania

Wow Iona, it is wonderful. I started reading it and read for over an hour!

Here is one thing you said about your marriage to Bill — it really hit my heart! "All I wanted was my freedom from the environment which was suffocating me and where I felt no love from my husband." Wow that surely described my feeling exactly from my marriage! You just got there before me!

Anyway your book is so good I could hardly put it down! And Iona — you are beautiful! The pictures of you in the book — such a beauty in those pictures and you didn't look at all FAT !!!!!!!

I really liked the story of canoeing down the river!!! And the ocean — you had a wonderful out-of-body experience there with being one with the ocean. I can so relate to this all. It is so neat to see pictures and put the people you speak of with faces! Joanie for one. And Cece. I even got up this morning and read a few more pages before work! I am a slow reader.

I am really enjoying your book — I only had a little time for reading last night. I have to say — wow Iona, you have had such an interesting and fun-filled life!!!! I like how you always went on those adventures by yourself — oh my gosh that bike trip through the Pine forest, no Pine Barrens — anyway how interesting and along the way you met many friends. You look so happy at your little apartment making pancakes! The picture of you and John getting married — you look so extremely happy — although I haven't read that part yet.
LL, Idaho

I finished the book today: what a Labor of Love! I really enjoyed it.

Now, without any slight whatsoever, because it was a great gift, may I return it so you can share it with someone else — and save the trees we both love?

I did enjoy *How on Earth*. It was a page-turner. I learned a lot about my friend.
CB, Pennsylvania

Spiral-bound, 205 pages, 56 color images. $25 includes shipping or I will email you the PDF for $10. I have only a few copies left and will need to gather at least 15 additional orders to get my bulk discount. Please make check payable to: The Go-Back Club and send it to Iona at 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255. Thanks! I'm also looking for a "real" publisher. If you have any ideas on that, please let me know at gobackclub@pa.net. Thank you.

Table of Contents for Iona's Memoir

See cover, review and ordering information on page 7. Spiral-bound, 205-page book is $25 or, if you'd like to receive it in pdf format, $10. Please make check or money order to The Go-Back Club and send it to Iona, 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255. Thanks very much.

Peace and #safepassage for Refugees in 2016

Blogpost by Aaron Gray-Block
via positivenewsus.org: January 25, 2016

A short distance outside the village of Molyvos on the Greek Island of Lesbos there is a rubbish dump of life jackets, discarded now but forever witness to the hope and suffering of those who fled war, poverty and oppression this year.

Amost 500,000 people crossed the Aegean Sea to Lesbos, many of them Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans. The dump site stands as a statue, a silent reminder of the risks and that so many more still hold out hope of a safe crossing.

It also includes the life jackets of those who never made it, of those who lost their lives at sea and can never return home or continue their journey north.

In November, 97 people died in the eastern Mediterranean and 187 lost their lives in December. They are the victims, casualties of their desperation and the ongoing failure of EU leaders to provide safe passage.

In honor of these people and with hope of better times, the Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders (MSF)-Greenpeace team on Lesbos used some of these life jackets to form a peace sign in the hills of Lesbos today.

They joined groups such as Sea-Watch and the Dutch Refugee Boat Foundation and local community groups such as Starfish to create the peace sign on New Year's Day to bring in 2016 with a message of hope. More than 100 volunteers used around 3,000 life jackets to create the image.

The image was positioned above the dump and in view of the 10 km (six miles) of sea separating Lesbos from Turkey, a gulf like no other—but a gulf that must be bridged.

Since MSF and Greenpeace started a joint maritime operation around Lesbos in November to provide rescue activities at sea in coordination with the Greek Coast Guard, we have helped thousands of refugees and migrants arrive safely to shore.

On December 16, MSF and Greenpeace helped pluck 83 people from the water after their old wooden boat capsized. At least two died. Since then, further rescues have occurred.

Although the number of arrivals has declined since the autumn months, in December more than 100,000 people still made the crossing to the Greek islands, daring the winter seas and stormy weather in overcrowded, flimsy boats.

*Amost 500,000 people crossed the Aegean Sea to Lesbos, many of them Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans. (*Will Rose/MSF/Greenpeace*)*

As war and violence rage unabated in their countries of origin, there is undiminished need for a safe haven. More than 3,700 have died while trying to cross the sea to Europe this year. More than a million have arrived by sea.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR has warned, however, for continued mass arrivals in 2016. MSF and Greenpeace remain operational in the Aegean Sea, doing whatever we can to assist refugee boats in distress.

We also urge our supporters to share the peace sign image in honour of the refugees and migrants and as a way of thanks to the volunteers and local communities on Lesbos working to ensure that 2016 can start with a safe passage.

Aaron Gray-Block is a crisis response campaigner with Greenpeace International.

Above: *Outside the village of Molyvos on the Greek Island of Lesbos is a rubbish dump of life jackets, forever witness to the hope and suffering of those who fled war, poverty and oppression this year. More than 3,700 have died while trying to cross the sea to Europe this year. (*Florian Schultz, Greenpeace*)*
Below: *No words needed. (*Will Rose/MSF/Greenpeace*)*

Letters and Emails from our Members

Hello.

Thanks Iona, terrific, very informative. My partner Rob Wheeler is also in Paris at the climate summit, I will forward his email from today; he had an article published in the journal that circulates to delegates.

That rug is just like the rugs my grandma used to make! (See January 2016 GBC newsbooklet at www.gobackclub.org.)
Alanna Hartzok, Pennsylvania

Hi Iona.

I'm your old contact from Maryland. Thanks for putting that note about the Go-Back Club on the envelope that John sent me. I'll publicize the Club to some "environmental people" at St. John's church in Columbia.

Keep up the great work.
Tom McCarthy, Maryland

Hello, Iona.

While you were playing (which you get to do, no guilt), I was on a long-overdue Go Back project. I had about a year's worth of #5 plastic cat food & litter bags. Parks takes only #1 & #2 and I hate to put the bags in the landfill, so they just pile up, cluttering and taking up space. I also save the polyester string used to sew the tops of the bags shut.

For the past three days, I've been cutting the bags open and sewing them together by hand. Of course, I used the string as thread. Until the sun fades them, they are colorful atop the firewood stacks. I love it—free tarps!

I hope this will encourage others to reuse before recycling.
Carole Baker, Pennsylvania

Paris ***Continued from page 17***

the INDCs aren't substantial enough to meet either of those goals.

What got left out of the deal?

•Keep it in the ground. The movement to stop fossil fuel extraction has grown dramatically recently, especially in the U.S. It is transforming climate politics and yet it was not reflected in any way in the Paris Agreement. The U.N. approach has been to get countries to offer cuts in emissions and increases in renewable energy deployment, energy efficiency or carbon sinks but it has never called for restraining fossil fuel development. It would be satisfied by a country deploying carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology to remove the carbon it emits by burning fossil fuels. But environmental, social justice and human rights activists would not call that adequate (even if CCS technology were widely available and affordable, which it isn't).

Fossil fuel extraction, transportation and combustion have a host of negative environmental, human rights and public health impacts aside from climate change. Perhaps next time activists will persuade countries to include limits on domestic fossil fuel extraction in their INDCs. They certainly will try. But the odds will be stacked against them.

"Keep it in the ground" is the rallying cry of some of the least powerful people in the world, like indigenous communities. On the other side are fossil fuel corporations with more money than God. Then again, if divestment campaigns—which got some big new pledges in Paris last week—continue to spread, fossil fuel companies might not be quite so powerful five years from now.

•Indigenous rights. A close cousin to "keep it in the ground" language would be language protecting the rights of communities, in particular indigenous communities, from the effects of fossil fuel extraction. Indigenous activists from all over the world came to Paris to advocate for that but were unsuccessful. Indigenous rights are mentioned in the preamble but left out entirely of the operational text.

•Sufficiently ambitious national targets. It's no surprise that INDCs were weak, since countries announced them long before negotiators arrived in Paris. There had been hope that some countries would strengthen their INDCs as part of negotiations. In particular, there were developing countries that had offered a "conditional" track of higher ambition in exchange for more climate finance. But rich countries didn't pony up enough money to spur any developing countries onto a faster track to a clean energy economy.

Virtually no rich countries are giving anywhere near enough to meet their historical obligations but the U.S. comes in for particular blame. It is giving less, relative to the size of its economy, than less populous countries such as Canada and many European nations. And congressional Republicans are trying to prevent payment of even the minimal amount of funding the U.S. has pledged.

•Decarbonization. The Paris Agreement calls for the world to "achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century." In other words, sometime between 2050 and 2100, we should have net-zero carbon emissions.

That's not the same thing as no carbon emissions. It means that we could still be emitting carbon but that would be balanced by removing carbon from the atmosphere through carbon sinks like forests or through CCS or other yet-to-be-developed technologies. This is theoretically consistent with a 2 C goal but more hardcore climate hawks wanted a goal of a carbon-free economy by 2050. In other words, they want an end to fossil fuel use entirely, as quickly as possible. But countries that are completely economically reliant on oil or gas extraction would not agree to this language—for example, Saudi Arabia, which was frequently tagged as the most obstructive country at the talks. And countries with powerful fossil fuel corporations wouldn't get on board with such language either.

For activists all over the world, the Paris Agreement shows there is still hope for maintaining a livable climate but there's a lot more work to be done pushing world governments to meet the challenge.