

Groundswell News Journal

A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice

We are a Global Family. News by and about Climate and Social Justice Activists.

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

Our Slogan: The way forward: cycle back to basics.

A Celebration of Youth. www.groundswellnews.org. Issue No. 73: January 29, 2021

Biden's Return to Paris Pact Just a First Step for U.S. Climate Action

Hopes are high that Joe Biden will kickstart U.S. involvement in global climate diplomacy and set an ambitious 2030 target to cut his country's planet-heating emissions.

By Megan Rowling

Thomson Reuters Foundation: January 21, 2021

As Joe Biden led the United States back into the Paris Agreement on climate change, after taking office Wednesday, diplomats and green groups breathed a collective sigh of relief – before urging him to step up cuts to U.S. emissions.

Soon after his inauguration, Biden signed an Executive Order, among others, to begin rejoining the 2015 climate pact, reversing a decision by climate-change skeptic Donald Trump. The process to re-enter the international accord takes a month, meaning the United States will only officially have been out of the deal for a short time, since exiting in November.

But Trump's hostility to the U.N. climate process and his support for polluting fossil fuels have left Biden's team a lot of catching up to do at home and abroad, policy analysts said.

"Rejoining the Paris Agreement is really the floor, not the ceiling, for the Biden administration on climate," said Jennifer Morgan, CEO of Greenpeace International.

If the U.S. government then moves to help drum up more global ambition to curb rising temperatures, it must be done in a spirit of "partnership and humility, not coming back in and telling everyone what



Photo: Hawaii Tribune-Herald

On Day One, President Joe Biden targets Trump policies on climate, virus.

they should be doing," Morgan said.

Rachel Cleetus, climate and energy policy director for the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), said there would be a number of opportunities in 2021 for Biden to help advance "a progressive climate agenda" on the world stage. Those include the G7 and G20 leaders' summits, and the U.N. climate talks in November.

Biden and his international climate envoy John Kerry should also pursue meetings with other major emitters – as Biden has indicated he will do – "to solidify ways to collectively tackle the climate crisis head-on," she said in a statement.

Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who led the world body when the Paris deal was adopted, said he was "delighted" Biden had committed to

bringing his country back into what Ban called "the peace pact with the planet."

Trump's vow to leave it, first made in 2017, had acted like a "cold shower" for the global agreement, Ban told journalists. The U.S. re-entry would "help mobilize and resuscitate" political will among global leaders, business, and civil society to implement the accord faster, he added.

Both the current U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa welcomed Biden's move to rejoin the Paris pact, urging the United States to help accelerate global efforts towards net-zero emissions and submit a new climate action plan with ambitious 2030 targets.

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What is the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice?

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Our Motto:

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Our Slogan:

The way forward:
cycle back to basics.

Mission of Our Journal

The mission of *Groundswell News* is to be a beautiful, inspiring, uplifting journal which educates and enlightens people about climate change through scientific articles and stories by and about activists who are working to protect life on Earth and preserve natural resources. We are a global family.

What is the Grassroots Coalition?

John and Iona Conner started this non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1990. The mission was and remains “dedicated to creating the critical mass of active participants needed to being ecological justice to this Earth by providing information and resources to individuals which encourage and assist them to make lifestyle changes beneficial to the environment and to effectively grapple with local and global environmental concerns.”

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 sign up for our newspaper. Please tell your family and friends about us.

What are we trying to achieve?

We want to rapidly increase the number of serious climate activists in the world and inspire them through stories from other activists. Our goal is to keep their spirits up, their energy strong, their hearts open, and their eyes bright and alive.

Our Values

This journal is based on love for Earth, all people, all forms of life – plus air, clouds, rain, snow, weather, oceans, forests, etc. We love Nature. We respect everyone and are willing to share our experiences, both good and bad, with others who may profit from them.

Guidelines for Submissions

I do not get directly involved in fundraising. To submit a story, you need to write a regular article about your work and submit it in a Word document with 2 or 3 photos, including captions and photo credits and then email it to me at groundswellnews@pa.net. If you need funding, mention that in your last paragraph and be sure to give your contact information.

Please email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net for the full Guidelines. I'll be eager to see what you submit. Thanks so much.

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Iona's Column: *Time Out*

Dearest Global Family,

I am taking a three-month break from publishing Groundswell News Journal because I need to do serious fundraising with my Mary Kay business, so if anyone wants to help that way, please see my ad on page 25. Also, tax-deductible contributions to the Grassroots Coalition can be made via PayPal using groundswellnews@pa.net or checks made payable to Grassroots Coalition and sent to the address listed above.

We had a magnificent Zoom meeting with our Board of Directors and members, who supported the idea that I publish quarterly and focus on our own stories. Please keep sending me your stories via email and I'll save them until I'm ready to return. I will be checking emails regularly but will deactivate my Facebook pages other than the Mary Kay one.

We will continue having monthly Zoom meetings during the break. If you want to become a member, please let me know and I'll add you to the group of people from around the world whom I invite to these. Our meetings are very inspiring with so many dedicated activists sharing ideas with each other.

If I earn enough money to establish financial stability, then I'm hoping to have enough in the future to help others and maybe even buy the little piece of woods I love so much but that might take a while.

You can also help by sharing *Groundswell News Journal* with your family and friends and asking if they would like to be on our email list. If they respond positively, please send me their names and email addresses.

Thank you for all the love and care you've given me and my work. I shall return!

Climate Emergency

'A Hugely Consequential First Move': Biden Offers to Extend Nuclear START Treaty With Russia

By Kenny Stancil, *excerpt*
Common Dreams: January 21, 2021

In a move applauded by anti-war activists, U.S. President Joe Biden on Thursday reportedly offered Russian President Vladimir Putin a five-year extension of the New START treaty just days before the pact – the only remaining nuclear arms control agreement regulating the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world – is set to expire.

If the White House and Russia cannot settle on a mutually agreed-upon plan to extend the New START treaty, which caps the number of offensively-deployed nuclear weapons that each country is allowed to have at 1,550, the deal will expire on February 5, 2021.

Letting the treaty expire could unleash “a full-blown nuclear arms race that exposes the whole world to an intolerable level of risk,” Derek Johnson, chief executive officer of Global Zero (an interna-

tional movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons), said in a statement on Thursday. “After four years of efforts to kill arms control and chase the false security of nuclear dominance, the U.S. is coming back to its senses,” said Johnson. “Extending New START is a hugely consequential first move by the Biden administration.”

In response to Biden’s proposed extension of the New START treaty, Paul Kawika Martin, senior director for policy and political affairs at Peace Action, said in a statement that after years of former President Donald Trump “putting Americans in harm’s way by decimating international agreements, we can all breathe a bit easier now that he cannot start a nuclear war within minutes.”

Trump “tried to conclude a shorter extension with Moscow in the final months of his presidency, but he failed to reach an agreement after his nuclear envoy spent months trying to persuade China to join

the accord before dropping that demand,” *The Washington Post* reported Thursday.

As *The Moscow Times* reported on Wednesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry accused the Trump administration of “deliberately and intentionally’ dismantling international arms control agreements,” interpreting “its ‘counterproductive and openly aggressive’ approach in talks” as an indication that Washington was not interested in extending New START.

Now that Biden is in office, Moscow expects the U.S. to “take a more constructive approach in its dialogue with us,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. “We are ready for such work on principles of equal rights and taking mutual interests into account.”

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/01/21/hugely-consequential-first-move-biden-offers-extend-nuclear-start-treaty-russia>

Biden *continued from page 1*

2030 Target

One key task for Washington, after re-entering the Paris climate deal, will be to respond to that call and set a U.S. emissions reduction target for 2030, embedded in a stronger national plan.

Signatories to the Paris accord were meant to submit updated plans to cut emissions and adapt to worsening extreme weather and rising seas by the end of 2020 – but due to delays caused by the pandemic only about 70 have done so.

The rest of the plans are expected to be delivered by the time of the postponed COP26 U.N. climate conference, set to be hosted by Britain in November.

The good news for Biden is that support for climate action is growing among the U.S. electorate.

A December survey of nearly 950 registered voters across the political spectrum found 75% supported U.S. participation in the Paris accord.

As well, 64% said the United States should reduce planet-heating emissions regardless of what other countries do, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication found.

Last week, the Rhodium Group of researchers and analysts said U.S. greenhouse gas emissions fell 10.3% in 2020, the

largest drop in the post-World War II era, as coronavirus crippled the economy.

But it warned the dip was not a clear indication that the United States could meet its more ambitious pledge under the Paris Agreement, to cut emissions 28% below 2005 levels by 2025.

Biden has said he plans to set the country on a path to net-zero emissions by 2050, something a growing number of major economies are now promising to do.

But he will first need to announce an emissions-cutting target for 2030 – one experts say must be in the order of 50% below 2005 levels to give the world a chance of holding global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the lower Paris goal.

Youth activists and some green groups have called for even more ambitious targets, saying the United States should aim to reach net-zero emissions by 2040 if it is to do its “fair share” to fight climate change.

“The United States is the second-largest emitter of carbon emissions from fossil fuels annually and the largest source of cumulative emissions to date. Yet for decades it has not done its fair share to rein in emissions,” said Cleetus of the UCS.

Climate Finance

Dipti Bhatnagar, coordinator of climate justice and energy programs for Friends of the Earth International, said high-carbon

lifestyles in the United States had contributed to “untold suffering” for families in the developing world.

“Droughts are destroying crops, cyclones are leveling homes, and whole nations are literally disappearing,” the Mozambican said. “The livelihoods and dignity of billions of people who didn’t create the climate crisis require the Biden administration to take immediate and far-reaching climate action, driven by justice, equity, and science.”

Climate finance experts want Biden’s government to make good on a promise to the Green Climate Fund, which helps developing nations adopt clean energy and adapt to a warmer world.

Trump refused to deliver \$2 billion of an earlier pledge to the fund – and campaigners are now hoping to see this money come through, as well as increased finance for poorer nations to develop cleanly and build their resilience to climate impacts.

Greenpeace’s Morgan said the United States should commit in its new climate action plan not to back further development of dirty energy – coal, oil, or gas – “Fossil fuels are like weapons of mass destruction – they need to be kept in the ground,” she said.

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20210120050026-at2se/>

Climate Emergency

Keystone XL, the Black Snake Pipeline, is Dead

By Faith Spotted Eagle
NoKXLPromise.org
January 22, 2021

On his first day as President, Joe Biden fulfilled the promise he made to us last year, and issued an Executive Order to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline permit.

This is a massive movement victory of a 10+ year fight, thanks to millions of people demanding an end to fossil fuels – and a signal that Biden is following through on his promises to protect people and planet.

In late 2015, former President Obama rejected the Keystone XL pipeline on the grounds that it would undermine the nation's leadership to tackle the climate crisis. Donald Trump reversed this decision in early 2017, but our collective efforts over the past four years have finally led to this day, with the “black snake” laying dead once again.

On behalf of our Promise to Protect coalition members, we want to thank each and every one of you who signed onto the Promise, to come to route if called and engage in peaceful direct actions to stop construction of this project that was trampling on the sovereign rights of Tribal Nations and threatening to wreak havoc on our climate.

Today is a day to celebrate and give thanks to all who worked to make this day possible. Watch the Indigenous Environmental Network's video at <https://www.facebook.com/ienearth/posts/10158713000295642>.

While this is a substantial victory for the Indigenous peoples who have been in this fight for over a decade, we must not forget about our relatives fighting the Line 3 and Dakota Access Pipelines, and other deadly fossil fuel projects that are poisoning our



Photo Courtesy NoKXLPromise.org

Collective efforts over the past four years have finally led to this day, with the “black snake” laying dead once again.

communities and fueling the climate emergency.

Next steps for you – Promise to Protect signers and Water Protectors:

- **Enbridge Line 3 Pipeline:** The Line 3 oil pipeline was granted federal permits without proper consultation with Tribal Nations, and no proper regard for its climate change impacts. The same reasons Biden is using to stop Keystone XL also apply to Line 3. Sign the petition to urge President Joe Biden to order a review of its federal permits and stop construction immediately, so Tribal Nations can be heard and climate impacts considered. It's at <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-biden-stop-line-3>.

- Sign up to learn more and join Water Protectors on the ground right now in Minnesota taking action to stop Line 3 at <https://welcomewaterprotectors.com>.

- **DAPL/Dakota Access Pipeline:** Two

of Trump's first presidential actions were to approve both the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines. Dakota Access (DAPL) is currently operating without a permit and in violation of key environmental laws, endangering tribal nations for the sake of oil profits. President Biden can stop this illegal pipeline with a stroke of a pen, and should take action to do so immediately. Sign the petition urging President Biden to shut down DAPL at <https://earthjustice.org/action/shut-down-the-dakota-access-pipeline>.

Stay tuned – we are also planning a virtual celebration in a few weeks that you will be invited to, featuring Promise coalition members who will also give an overview of the other pipeline fights and how you can take action.

As we take time to celebrate today and give thanks, we remain mindful that there is still much work left to be done.

“For over a decade, Indigenous peoples and our allies have prayed, cried, and demonstrated to stop this evil zombie pipeline. We look forward to hearing President Biden take further action by stopping DAPL and Line 3. Nothing less than stopping these attacks by guaranteeing free, prior, and informed consent and establishing a climate test will we consider to call this a complete victory. However, today is a great day. And I thank all that helped us get here.”

~ Joye Braun, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal member, Frontline Community Organizer with Indigenous Environmental Network ~

“On behalf of the Ponca Tribe, we thank President Biden on his commitment to listen to the tribal nations and all of those involved in fighting this effort. We thank all the pipeline fighters, land owners, and all involved that have fought against this for so long and made this a priority for this new administration.”

~ Larry Wright, Jr., Chairman Ponca Tribe of Nebraska ~

<https://nokxlpromise.org/media/>

Climate Emergency

President Biden Refuses to Make our Climate Crisis Worse, Cancels Canadian Tar Sands Pipeline Keystone XL

By Stephen Leahy

Need to Know: January 21, 2021

There's been considerable press about the cancellation of the Keystone XL oil pipeline but much of it lacks context and some is plain wrong. So let's start at the heart of this 12-year saga, a school bus in Canada's tar sands.

I wasn't going to stop for the school bus stuck in the mud outside of Fort McMurray, Alberta in the heart of the Canada's tar sands industry but my kids insisted. It had been raining most of the week and the grassy field was soaked and slick. We stopped and got out and looked at the 12,000-kilogram (26,456-pound) bus uselessly spinning its wheels, digging deeper into the mud. Someone got the driver to stop, essentially saying you're making a bad problem worse.

No one had a vehicle large enough to tow or push the bus which would have likely become mired as well. A few other people came by, and collectively, we came up with ideas. I thought it an impossible task for a handful of people barely able to stand in the muck ourselves. A few trials, some planks of wood and a gleeful bouncing up and down inside the back of the bus produced the unexpected result of freeing the vehicle.

I was surprised we'd done it and also by my own feelings of intense satisfaction at what we strangers had collectively accomplished. By not making a bad problem worse, we figured out a way to solve it together.

President Biden's cancellation of the Keystone XL (KXL) oil pipeline is an example of not making a really bad problem worse. The Need-to-Know here is that KXL would have added 110 million tons of climate-heating CO2 into the atmosphere every year for at least 50 years, a study in journal *Nature Climate Change* reported in 2014. That's country-sized emissions – enough to put it on the list of the top 35 worst carbon-polluting countries in the world, as I wrote in *Vice* at that time.

I first learned of KXL more than 10 years ago and ended up writing a dozen articles about it, including how Canada's spy agencies were monitoring KXL protestors as potential threats to national security

The 36-inch diameter pipe was intended



Photo: Julie Dermansky

Texas portion of the Keystone XL pipeline already completed.

to pump 830,000 barrels of bitumen per day from the Alberta tar sands down to U.S. Gulf Coast for refining. Calgary-based TransCanada Pipelines, now renamed TC Energy, originally claimed the pipeline was needed for U.S. energy security, but environmentalists said it was to be refined into diesel and exported to Europe. An interesting Need-to-Know today is that the U.S. doesn't need the oil and Europe doesn't want dirty diesel. In fact, Europe bought nearly 1.4 million electric vehicles in 2020, more than any other country in the world.

Here's where things got interesting in 2020. TC Energy began pipeline construction in Alberta after Jason Kenney's provincial government agreed in March 2020 to fund the first year of construction with a C\$1.5 billion (US\$1.18 billion) investment. Kenney also guaranteed C\$6 billion (US\$4.71 billion) worth of loans, all as part of an effort to jump-start the northern portion of the project ahead of the U.S. Presidential election. Last summer about 90 kilometres (56 miles) of pipeline were built in Alberta.

As expected, on Inauguration Day President Biden signed an Executive Order rescinding KXL permits. Expect Jason Kenney to scream loud and long. Although it's really Albertans who should be screaming about the blatant waste of their tax money on the long predicted cancellation of the project.

The last thing an escalating climate crisis needs is to increase fossil fuel infrastructure. That's a clear case of making a very bad problem much worse. To repeat another Need-to-Know: The 2015 Paris climate agreement means all countries agreed to phase out fossil fuel use. That's essential in order to keep

climate change under 2 degrees C.

Instead of wasting \$1.5 billion on the doomed KXL pipeline, Alberta's Kenney should have used that public money to help workers in the oil industry with re-training and financial support during the required phase down of the industry.

A Need-to-Know is that the fossil fuel industry is not a major employer in Canada or most countries. It's a capital intensive sector, not job intensive. Less than 1% of Canada's workforce are employed in those industries in total. A 20-year phase out of Canada's fossil fuel sector is entirely doable and would not disrupt the economy, said economist Jim Stanford in a new report.

A 20-year phase out would reduce fossil employment by about 8,500 positions per year – as many as Canada usually creates every 10 days. The industry already shed twice that number of jobs in 2020 due to poor oil prices and pandemic-induced recession. Most of those jobs aren't coming back. Stanford, who heads the Vancouver-based Centre for Future Work said, "It is now undeniable: fossil fuels will disappear from most uses in the foreseeable future."

The industry and its supporters will continue to deny the undeniable, making a bad situation worse. For example the U.S. Chamber of Commerce claims the cancellation of KXL "...will put thousands of Americans out of work..." The very influential U.S. Chamber has been a long-time denier of climate change and played a key role in getting former President Trump to pull the U.S. out of the Paris agreement.

Continuing to deny the undeniable is why many once-prosperous past societies collapsed, anthropologists report in a new study, "When Good Governments Go Bad?" In studying 30 different societies they concluded that collapse could very likely have been avoided but citizens relied on their leaders to act in societies' best interests. Instead, leaders protected their own interests, and those of the elite in society.

Let's not continue to repeat past mistakes.

Source: <https://leahy.substack.com/p/president-biden-refuses-to-make-our>

Climate Emergency

Major Win for the Planet': Federal Court Strikes Down Trump Coal Power Plant Rule

“This decision frees up the new Biden administration to begin working immediately on the science-based greenhouse pollution rules we desperately need to make up for lost time.”

By Andrea Germanos
Common Dreams: January 19, 2021

Climate campaigners welcomed a federal court's decision Tuesday to strike down the Trump administration's Affordable Clean Energy rule – dubbed by its critics the “Dirty Power” rule – which loosened restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions from coal plants.

“A failure by Trump is a major win for the planet,” said Clare Lakewood, legal director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute. “The court has wisely struck down another effort by this administration to shred environmental protections in service of polluters.”

Finalized in 2019 and signed by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chief Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, the Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule was a replacement to the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. ACE was met with fierce outrage and lawsuits from environmental groups and dozens of states and cities who said it was an industry-friendly rule that rejected science to the detriment of public health and the climate crisis.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said Monday that, “Promulgation of the ACE rule and its embedded repeal of the Clean Power Plan rested critically on a mistaken reading of the Clean Air Act.” The court remanded the rule back to the EPA.

According to Bloomberg, Tuesday's decision rejects the Trump EPA's position that the Clean Air Act only allows the agency to craft emissions restrictions that apply directly “at the source” of power plants.



Photo: Tony Webster/Flickr/cc

The Sherburne County (Sberco) Generating Station, a coal-fired power plant owned by Xcel Energy and located in Becker, Minnesota, shown in 2016.

The position was a departure from the Obama administration's sector-wide approach to reducing emissions.

“In other words, the EPA reads the statute to require the Agency to turn its back on major elements of the systems that the power sector is actually and successfully using to efficiently and cost-effectively achieve the greatest emission reductions,” the court said.

It added that there is “no basis – grammatical, contextual, or otherwise – for the EPA's assertion.”

Andrea McGimsey, senior director for Environment America's Global Warming Solutions campaign, saw the ruling as “a major step in the right direction” that affirms ACE “was clearly a disastrous and misconceived regulation from the start.”

The Sierra Club also applauded the appeals court's decision and expressed hope the incoming Biden administration would put the EPA back on the right course.

“The court's decision to vacate former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler's Dirty Power Plan is the apt bookend to the Trump administration's EPA, which was defined by a general subservience to the fossil fuel industry and dozens of legal defeats brought by public health and environmen-

tal organizations,” Joanne Spalding, the organization's chief climate counsel, said in a statement.

She said that, “The EPA's role is to protect the American people from dangerous pollution and act on the greatest threat to our country: the climate crisis,” but the “Dirty Power Plan didn't do either of these things and the court rightly vacated it.”

“We now look forward to the Biden administration keeping its promise and acting aggressively to restore the EPA to its institutional mandate and put its resources and expertise toward solving problems, not creating more of them,” said Spalding.

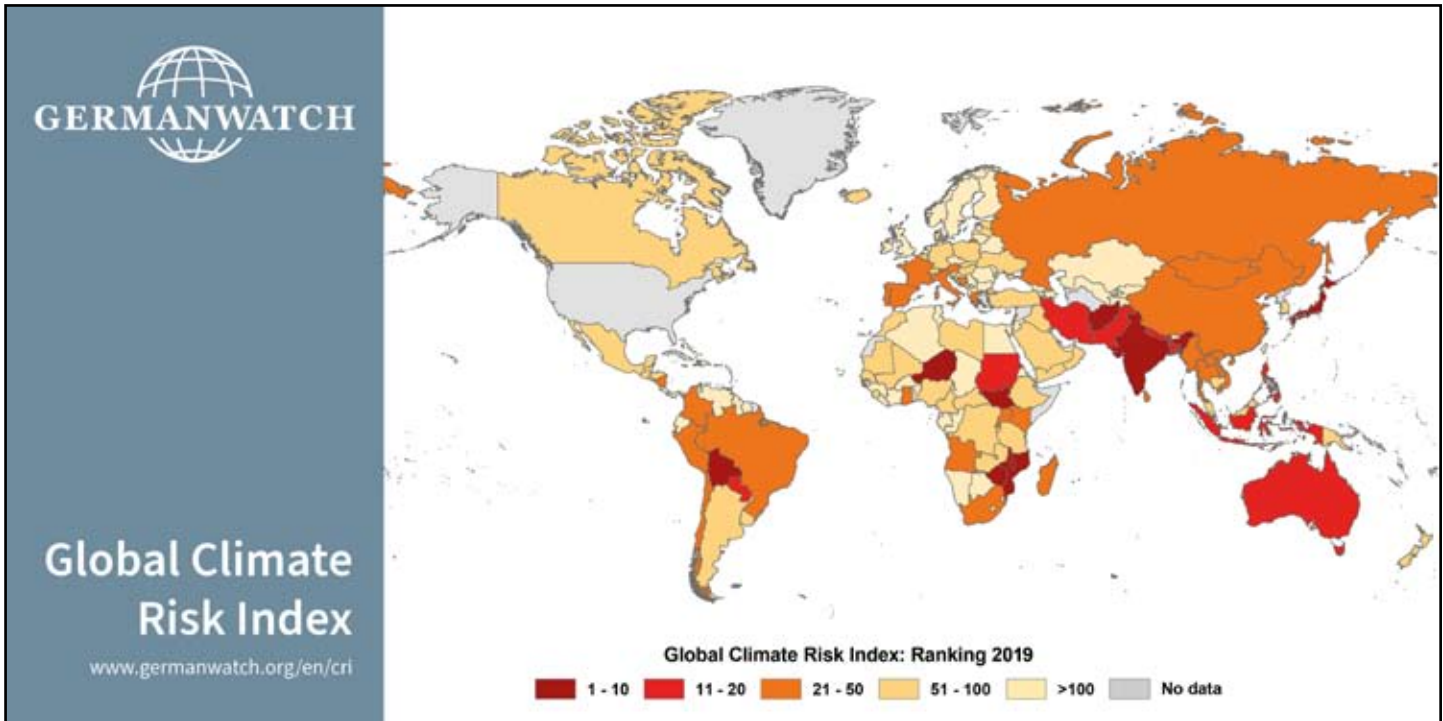
Center for Biological Diversity's Lakewood added that the ruling “frees up the new Biden administration to begin working immediately on the science-based greenhouse pollution rules we desperately need to make up for lost time.”

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Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/01/19/major-win-planet-federal-court-strikes-down-trump-coal-power-plant-rule>

OUR MOTTO: USE IT UP, WEAR IT OUT, MAKE IT DO, OR DO WITHOUT!

Climate Emergency



India Among Worst Climate Impacted

By Rituraj Phukan, India
Climate Awareness Report for Earth
January 25, 2021

Vulnerable people in developing countries suffer most from extreme weather events and India ranked among the top 10 worst affected countries in 2019. Over 475,000 people lost their lives as a direct result of more than 11,000 extreme weather events globally, with losses amounting to around US\$2.56 trillion during the period 2000 to 2019.

These are some of the main results of the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, published recently by the environmental think tank Germanwatch ahead of the Global Climate Adaptation Summit. The index analyses and ranks to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of climate related extreme weather events like storms, floods, heat waves, etc., with the most recent data available.

The countries most affected in 2019 were Mozambique, Zimbabwe, as well as the Bahamas. For the period from 2000 to 2019 Puerto Rico, Myanmar, and Haiti rank highest. India was ranked at 7th in the list with an estimated economic damage of US\$10 billion from floods during the extended and intense monsoon season and further losses of over US\$8 billion from cyclonic storms.

Storms and their direct implications – precipitation, floods, and landslides – were one major cause of losses and damages in 2019. Of the ten most affected countries in 2019, six were hit by tropical cyclones. Recent science suggests that the number of severe tropical cyclones will increase with every tenth of a degree in global average temperature rise.

Developing countries are particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. They are hit hardest because they are more vulnerable to the damaging effects of a hazard but have lower coping capacity. Eight out of the ten countries most affected by the quantified impacts of extreme weather events in 2019 belong to the low-to lower-middle income category and half of them are Least Developed Countries.

The key messages include suggestions for prioritizing mitigation and adaptation efforts, especially after the global Covid-19 pandemic has reiterated the fact that both risk and vulnerability are systemic and interconnected. It is therefore important to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable against different types of risk (climatic, geophysical, economic, or health-related). The post-pandemic policy deliberations between countries will need to address how the need for support for vulnerable countries concerning future

loss and damage is to be determined on an ongoing basis, finalize the framework to generate and make available financial resources to meet these needs, and strengthen the implementation of measures for adapting to climate change.

This year's 16th edition of the Climate Risk Index clearly shows that signs of escalating climate change can no longer be ignored – on any continent or in any region. Impacts from extreme-weather events hit the poorest countries hardest as these are particularly vulnerable to the damaging effects of a hazard, have a lower coping capacity and may need more time to rebuild and recover.

The Global Climate Risk Index indicates a level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events, which countries should understand as warnings in order to be prepared for more frequent and/or more severe events in the future. High-income countries are also feeling climate impacts more clearly than ever before. Effective climate change mitigation and adaptation to prevent or minimize potential damage is therefore in the self-interest of all countries worldwide.

Source: <https://climateawarenessreport.wordpress.com/2021/01/25/india-among-worst-climate-impacted/>

Earth Regeneration



Photos: Tinashe

MAYA members Tendai, Melissa, and Rutendo hard at work preparing the ground and planting trees.

Youth Group Urges Planting Trees in Zimbabwe

By Jussa Kudherezera, Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA), Zimbabwe

Ignorance, need for firewood, urban farming, among others, are causing high deforestation in urban areas. Not acting, not proffering solutions as residents whilst the environment is being destroyed, will haunt us one day when we become victims to natural disasters.

During this period, when Zimbabwe is experiencing high rainfalls countrywide, loose soil is eroded into homesteads, thus destroying crops, furniture, and other things. Currently hundreds of families in Mutare are in poverty as their few items which were supposed to sustain them during this lockdown sank into mud. The devastating event was a wake-up call to every citizen. There is paramount need for collaborative efforts in protecting the environment, especially to stop deforestation and poor farming in mountains and river banks.

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) urges every citizen to take action and join the Re-Greening Mutare Project. Today MAYA planted 50 baobab trees. A baobab tree is well known as the “Tree of Life” with its numerous benefits as it provides shelter, clothing, food, water for animals, among others. Baobab roots prevent soil erosion, which helps in reducing mud and rock flows.

Let us save lives by planting a tree.

Contact MAYA:

Email: manicayouthassembly@gmail.com

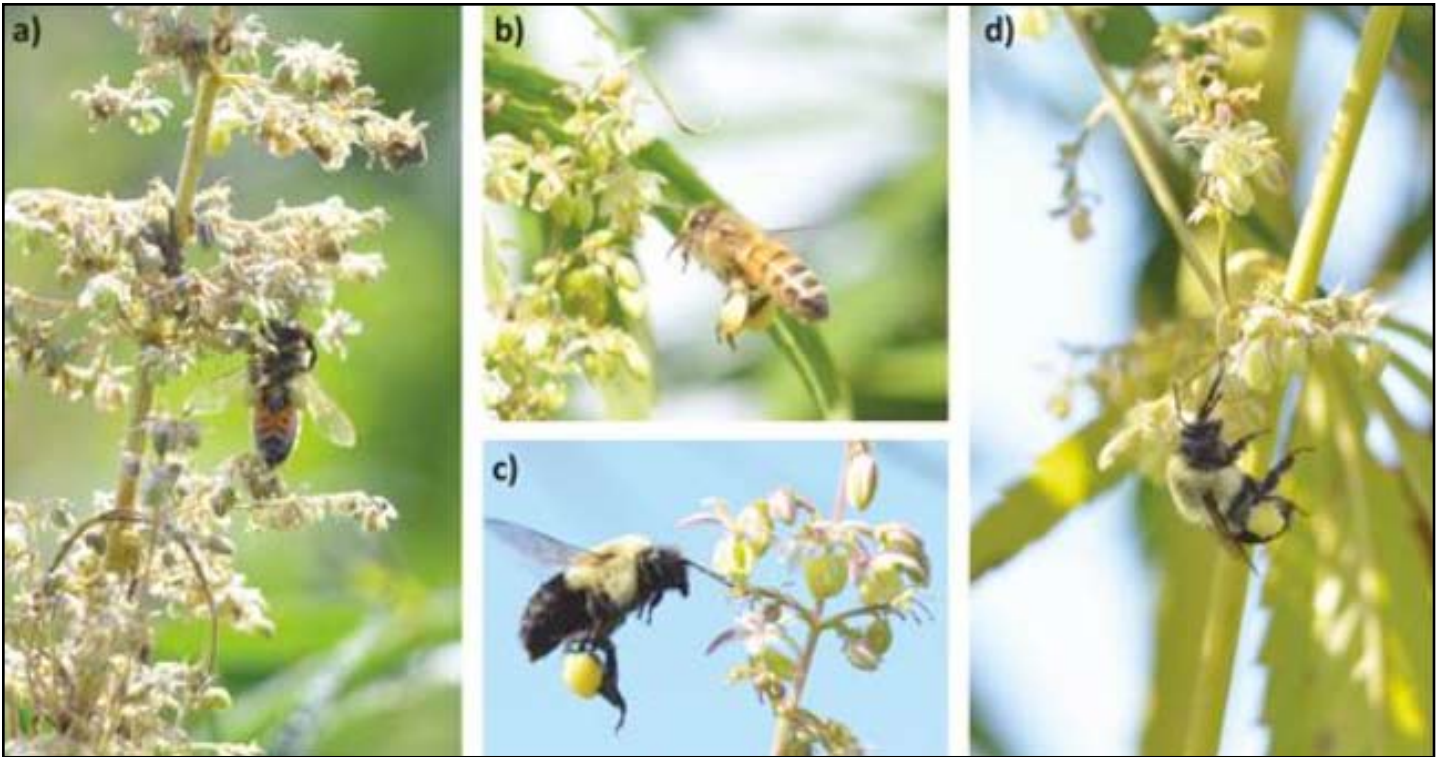
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Earth Regeneration



Bees Love Cannabis! Researchers Discover Hemp Could Help Restore Bee Populations

Submitted by Fran Staret
Pennsylvania USA

Return to Now: February 11, 2020



Hemp provides bees excellent nutrition when they need it most, new study finds.

Hemp attracts bees in droves, a new study finds. Researchers tested several strains and found bees – both wild and domestic – love them all, especially the taller varieties.

It's an unusual finding considering cannabis doesn't possess the sweet nectar or bright colors typical of flowers that attract pollinators.

The researchers speculate it's something to do with the plentiful pollen found in hemp flowers.

On top of that, hemp blooms right when bees need it the most – between the end of July and the end of September – right when other pollinator-friendly flowers disappear.

Expanding hemp cultivation in the United States could provide food for the bees during a time of year when few other options are available to them, the researchers note.

In a preliminary study last summer, researchers from Colorado State University came to similar conclusions. They set up bee traps in industrial hemp fields during peak flowering season and collected almost 2,000 bees from 23 different bee genera.

Nearly half of those were classic honeybees, but native solitary bees, such as *Melissodes bimaculata* and *Peponapis pruinosa*, turned up in surprisingly “high proportions.”

“Industrial hemp can play an important role in providing sustained nutritional options for bees during the cropping season,” wrote study author Colton O'Brien, a soil and crop scientist for Colorado State University.

The researchers note that earlier experiments looking at crops like genetically modified canola flowers didn't produce the same volume or variety of bees.



In addition to food, hemp provides habitat. On a continent where much of the acreage is dedicated to non-pollen producing mono-crops covered in bee-harming insecticides, introducing more pollinating crops is critical to the survival of bees and the ecosystems they occupy.

Fortunately, the 2018 Farm Bill, passed in December, legalized hemp production in the United States. 80,000 acres are already under cultivation, with permits for another 15,000 acres awaiting approval.

So far, studies have only looked at non-psychoactive hemp, but if this French beekeeper's bees are any indication, future studies could prove bees love THC-containing cannabis too!

Source: <https://returntonow.net/2020/02/11/bees-love-hemp-study/>

Ending Inequality



Photo: I'm claiming this as an iconic United States photo we can share freely of this amazing young woman. I have no idea where I found it.
"Somehow we've weathered and witnessed / a nation that isn't broken / but simply unfinished / We the successors of a country and a time / Where a skinny Black girl / descended from slaves and raised by a single mother / can dream of becoming president / only to find herself reciting for one"

Amanda Gorman (22) Delivers Her Eloquent, Inspiring, Heartfelt Inauguration Poem, "The Hill We Climb"

Mr. President, Dr. Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr. Emhoff,
Americans and the world,
When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose

To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, charac-
ters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb

Amanda Gorman *continued on next page*

Ending Inequality

Amanda Gorman *continued from previous page*

If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation

because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/amanda-gorman-inaugural-poem-transcript/index.html>

Amanda Gorman's Web Page

<https://www.theamandagorman.com/>

Wordsmith. Change-maker.

Amanda Gorman is the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history, as well as an award-winning writer and *cum laude* graduate of Harvard University, where she studied Sociology. She has written for *The New York Times* and has three books forthcoming with Penguin Random House.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, she began writing at only a few years of age. Now her words have won her invitations to the Obama White House and to perform for Lin-Manuel Miranda, Al Gore, Secretary Hillary Clinton, Malala Yousafzai, and others.

Amanda has performed multiple commissioned poems for CBS This Morning and she has spoken at events and venues across the country, including the Library of Congress and Lincoln Center. She has received a Genius Grant from OZY Media, as well as recognition from Scholastic Inc., YoungArts, the *Glamour* magazine College Women of the Year Awards, and the Webby Awards. She has written for *The New York Times* newsletter *The Edit* and penned the manifesto for Nike's 2020 Black History Month campaign. She is the recipient of the Poets & Writers Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award, and is the youngest board member of 826 National, the largest youth writing network in the United States.



Human Interest



Photos: Nsah Divine Sunjo, Communications Officer

Ngo is creating awareness on gender-based violence and letting women know how the micro-credit program for women's empowerment works and how they can benefit.

Hard-Working Cameroon Group Accomplishes a LOT

By Ngo Banfogha, Cameroon

"We went into 2020 with a great plan – the chessboard was laid out, and we knew our next 30 moves. Then Covid-19 hit, and every piece on the chessboard moved. With your unwavering support, we were able to pivot our plans to make a difference in this new reality."

~ Ngo Abdulai Banfogha ~

Vote of Thanks

Hope for a Better Future (H4BF) delivers programmes in partnership beneficiary communities to help ensure that every woman and child lives in a safe and clean environment to meet their basic needs and expands their opportunities to reach their full potential. H4BF would like to express its deep appreciation to all resource partners including the UNDP, UNFPA, Global Aid for Africa,

MasterPeace Foundation, RDF Cameroon, International Cities of Peace, and Food Plant Solution, who have generously contributed to its work on WASH, Gender-Based violence (GBV), Nutrition, Peace Building, Agriculture, Food Security, Child Protection, Health for Women and Children, including persons with disabilities in the regions.

H4BF would like to extend particular thanks to partners who provided thematic funding including the UNDP, RDF Cameroon, and Global Aid for Africa for H4BF, MasterPeace Foundation for technical support and recommendations, International Cities of Peace for recommending H4BF to funding partners.

The thematic funding has enabled H4BF to support communities within North West, South West, West, Center, and Littoral regions of Cameroon to strengthen the

enabling environments and deliver strategic direct interventions that bring Humanitarian Services to marginalized women and children (including persons with disabilities), their families, and communities. Thematic funding provides greater flexibility, enables H4BF to continuously improve the quality of interventions, allows for longer-term planning, and makes programmes more sustainable. It reflects the trust that resource partners have in H4BF's capacity and ability to deliver quality support under all circumstances and has made possible the results described in this report.

Finally, H4BF takes this opportunity to thank all our partners for their commitment and trust in us, and in our work for women, children, their families, and communities within North West, South

Accomplishments *continued on next page*

Human Interest

Accomplishments *continued from previous page*

West, West, Center, and Littoral regions of Cameroon.

H4BF was founded in 2009 and registered in 2014 as a non profit organization. We are a team of 18 – 11 girls and 7 boys.

Program's Achievement Highlights
Agriculture, Food Security/Livelihood

- 50 unemployed youths and leaders of farming communities between 16-35 years have received training on climate smart agriculture and agro pastoral activities for 2 years and 10 months training course at the H4BF Biofarm center
- More than 100 women, youths, and leaders of farming communities have received training on livestock production/management, planting technics, post-harvest management for the short course program at the H4BF Biofarm Centre
- Donated food to 150 households and over 2,200 internally displaced persons (IDPS)

• Monthly Multipurpose Cash assistance provided to 50 households benefiting over 320 internally displaced persons in Ako sub division, Donga Mantung

Child Protection

- Over 20,000 children, parents, teachers, and caregivers reached through awareness creation on prevention techniques – teaching them how to stop abuse before it begins
- Over 12 workshops organized on effective investigations with a child victim-centric approach
- Over 281 survivors and their families connected with shelter, medical care, counselling, educational support, and legal assistance throughout the judicial process and beyond

Education

- Provided access to learning opportunities for over 1,000 girls and boys with 523 girls and boys in early learning programmes, 213 at primary level and 264 at the secondary level
- Established School Environmental gardens in 4 schools to inculcate values of environmental protection and management in pupils and youths
- Distributed over 12,000 face masks within 28 schools in North West and West regions
- Installed 4 washing station in 4 schools to combat the spread of Covid-19

Nutrition & Shelter

- More than 80 peasant farmers trained on Growing Healthy Food
- Over 600 one-on-one counselling sessions provided to women on exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months, wean-



H4BF volunteer Bisona Solange is teaching older women in the community how to properly wash their hands to keep themselves safe from Covid-19.

ing techniques, and maternal and child health and nutrition

- Over 80 micro loans provided with interested mothers to provide business & money management training and access to microloans to start or grow a business.
- Over 20 women groups empowered to increase access to high-quality foods, income-generating activities, and nutrition knowledge
- 500 shelter kits distributed
- Non-food items distributed to over 800 households

Gender-Based Violence

- Over 500 women trained in basic management, group dynamics, record keeping, and supported with startup materials to begin their own businesses
- Over 86 micro loans provided with interested mothers to provide business & money management training and access to microloans to start or grow a business
- Over 52,000 sensitized on gender-based violence and women's rights

Health

- 10 female nurses' state registered nurses have been trained and supported to become entrepreneurs and to open health clinics in rural areas.
- Trained over 30 CHW (Community Health Workers) and engaged them to provide preventive and curative basic health care to IDPS in bushes, affected communities, urban and peri urban areas
- Over 15 free classes organized in Nutrition, Dance, Meditation, Pilates, Awareness

- Over 7 individuals provided with non-invasive care via partnerships with health districts in Bamenda

Water, Hygiene & Sanitation

- 13 villages trained (girls and boys, households, and authorities) on adopting hygiene and sanitation practices
- 5 communities provided with access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation, handwashing, and menstrual hygiene facilities
- 400 villages (local authorities) take ownership for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services
- Trained 2 water management committees in all communities where we have provided potable water

Youth Engagements & Peace Building

- Over 12 workshops organized on youth career orientation and youth involvement on peace building, community development, and electoral process
- 300 youths trained and supported with start-up materials to start their own businesses.

Read the full report at <http://www.h4bfcooperative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/H4BF-2020-ANNUAL-REPORT1.pdf>.

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Human Interest



Pencil Art by Prince Temitope Olusanya, Nigeria

(left) Femi Otedola is a Nigerian businessman, philanthropist, and former chairman of Forte Oil PLC, an importer of fuel products. Otedola is the founder of Zenon Petroleum and Gas Ltd, and the owner of a number of other businesses across shipping, real estate and finance. He has recently invested in power generation as part of the liberalization of the sector in Nigeria. (right) Genevieve Nnaji is a Nollywood actress, singer, model, entrepreneur, television personality, and philanthropist. In 2019, her movie, Lionheart (2018), was selected by the Nigerian Oscars Selection Committee as Nigeria's submission to the Best International Feature Film Category of the 2020 Oscars. It was the FIRST film ever submitted to the Oscars by Nigeria.

By Prince Temitope Olusanya, Nigeria

My name is Prince Temitope Olusanya, I am an artist and I make Pencil Art.

Art has been my passion for many years because I found expression through it, I decided I wanted to tell stories with Pencil Art of successful, influential people who are transforming lives, inspiring the younger generations, and changing narratives.

I started out last year June when I decided to identify top 60 successful and influential Nigerians because that's where I'm based.

Nigeria was turning 60 on Independence Day on October first so the project was to use Pencil Art to identify these 60 icons who have inspired change over the past 60 years. Everything was going fine till a few days after the Independence, when a protest broke out. Because of that protest, the whole idea had to be restructured.

With over 60 portraits done perfectly

well... I had to, like, start again. Not really start from scratch but, like, we had a plan, we had designs ready and contents to push out for publicity but we had to start over again.

Soon the portraits will be released.

I am excited because I learnt significant things last year 2020 and I am grateful to God that happened in my life that year.

So now I am identifying people all over the world; exciting isn't it? The world!

I got the idea by the Holy Spirit to identify People all around the world. And it occurred to me that there are A LOT of people to identify; that is why, to me, this could be a life-long project.

We have incredible people all over the world doing incredible things that social media won't bring to your face like HEY!!! And that is why there is a need to identify them.

A lot of individuals have sacrificed their resources, time, and life to helping people, inspiring change around the world we live

in today and it's amazing.

There is a lot to learn and a lot to do. That's why I have a very small team of friends, but they are really very supportive. Of course I'll have challenges but there is nothing I cannot do.

I will share two Pencil art pictures of two Nigerian icons I identified last year. Why? Because they inspire me and I'm very sure that they've really inspired many others, too.

Once again, I'd like to thank my special Aunt for this wonderful opportunity, Aunt Iona. I love you so much. I love your work for the Earth.

My name is Prince, my brand name is Artaac, which means Art - Aesthetic and Creativity. For Art, for beauty and creativity. To follow me, here's my IG link.

https://www.instagram.com/____artaac?r=nametag

Thank you all.

Human Interest



Photos by David Hunter Bishop

Dusk on the Kinabatangan River, Sukau, Sabah, Malaysia, one of the better locations for viewing the increasingly scarce orangutan in their natural habitat, an endangered species threatened with extinction by the spread of palm oil plantations on the Island of Borneo.

Orangutans and Palm Oil in Borneo: What I Learned

By David Hunter Bishop, World-Traveling Nomad

My flight from Bangkok landed late afternoon in Kota Kinabalu, capital of Malaysia's District of Sabah in the north-eastern part of the Island of Borneo.

After two years backpacking about South and Central America and Southeast Asia, I was excited about my new destination.

Borneo had been on my mind since I retired and began traveling. Its lush jungles were home to orangutans, an endangered species most closely related to humans.

Decades ago, Borneo was popularized in a kitschy genre of books and films, popularizing comic images of the "Wild Man of Borneo," attired in a loin cloth and large bone through his nose.

Although I'd taken that image with me from my youth, more important to me today was the growing worldwide environmental impact of palm oil, its impact on orangutans and other endangered species, and its significant contributions to global warming.

I was surprised by what I found.

Borneo, the world's third largest island, encompasses parts of two nations – Malaysia and Indonesia – that are the world's two largest producers of palm oil, a hugely profitable industry.

I wanted to see this for myself, these vast jungles and the growing palm oil plantations, making billions of dollars for some of the world's largest corporations, while the last of the remaining orangutans in the world struggle to survive extinction.

Now from my seat on the plane, the

Orangutans *continued on next page*

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Orangutans *continued from previous page*

exotic and enigmatic island of Borneo was finally coming into view.

It wasn't long before I joined the conversation about palm oil.

My taxi driver had lived for 17 years in Sandakan, a city near the heart of the dense jungles that were prey to the oil palm industry in Sabah. While taking me to my Airbnb in Kota Kinabalu, he told me he had witnessed the rapid growth of the oil palm industry.

So is it a problem, today?

"Naaahhhhh," he said. Palm oil makes billions for the industry barons, but some of that filters down into the hands of Malaysian people who find work on the rich plantations.

Problem for the orangutan, though, I suggested? He laughed, "Yeah!"

My first night in Kota Kinabalu, I ate at Puna Sadap, an outdoor food stand featuring traditional Malaysian food in the A-Square Container night market, constructed of recycled metal shipping containers along the waterfront of the central business district.

The food was exquisite, made from traditional recipes and ingredients painstakingly picked from Borneo's ancient jungles, said to be twice as old as the Amazon's.

There I met Malaysia native George Lai, who was schooled in England and had windsurfed in Hawaii in the late 1980s.

Lai, an educator, loved the environment and lamented the clearcutting of Malaysia's hardwood forests, paving the way for palm oil plantations.

Yet while concerned for his native land, he's resigned to the steam-rolling impact of palm oil's destruction – orangutans decimated, pygmy elephants down to around 1,500 – Lai named species after species on the verge of obliteration. Tale after tale he told of the destruction unfolding.

"I don't know..." he'd repeat with a shrug after each one "...what to do?"

No accurate reading of modern Malaysia can avoid palm oil, the nation's primary commodity. Indonesia and Malaysia, which share Borneo Island with the tiny Kingdom of Brunei, account for 84 percent of the world's supply.

The U.S. alone imported \$1.23 billion worth of crude palm oil in FY2020, about

Orangutans *continued on next page*



An aging orangutan in the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center, Sandakan, Sabah, where displaced, rescued orangutans prepare for reentry into the wild. Not all of them make it back, and this one will likely live out its life here. (Orangutans in the wild were too too difficult for me to photograph without better photography equipment.)

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Orangutans *continued from previous page*
one-third of it from Malaysia.

But in the wake of an extensive investigation by the Associated Press published in 2020, the United States banned all imports of palm oil by the industry giant Sime Darby. (See “Rape, abuses in palm oil fields linked to top beauty brands” at <https://apnews.com/article/palm-oil-abuse-investigation-cosmetics-2a209d60c42bf0e8fc-c6f8ea6daa11c7>.)

In an announcement issued December 31, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Office of Trade cited substantial evidence of “forced labor and other abuses” on numerous plantations spread across Borneo.

A few months earlier, in October 2020, the U.S. banned imports from Malaysian palm oil giant FGV Holdings Berhad.

Both companies engaged in systemic rape of plantation workers, child labor, human trafficking, and outright slavery, the customs agency said.

Both firms are members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a private industry group established in 2004 to promote palm oil “sustainability.”

The RSPO released a statement in October in response to the FGV ban, expressing “zero-tolerance” for the practices described in the complaint, but not denying them.

However in response to Sime Darby’s ban, the RSPO issued a written response that said an audit of the company’s practices in 2020 “did not generate any red flags against Sime Darby Plantation.”

While industry observers had been making similar claims about industry players for years, these were the first two palm oil companies targeted by U.S. government officials over concerns about forced labor.

Palm oil plays an immense role in the everyday life of modern consumers.

The world’s leading producers of processed foods, cosmetics, soaps and shampoos use tons of palm oil in their products. Yet you may not know it even if you carefully read ingredient labels.

Manufacturers list palm oil and its derivatives on labels under a variety of aliases, such as Octyl Palmitate and Stearic Acid, making it difficult for consumers to realize how much we actually consume on a daily basis. But you can expect to find palm oil in one form or another in as many as half the products sold in any supermarket.

While palm oil seeds produce a high-yield, low-cost crop superior to alterna-



Clusters of palm fruit grow at the base of the branches in this tree growing on a plantation near Sukau, Sabah, Malaysia, where the worldwide demand for palm oil is threatening orangutans and other species, such as pygmy elephants, with extinction.

tive oils for large-scale manufacturing of many consumer products, not to mention biodiesel fuel, production of palm oil is related to widespread deforestation, resulting in the release of greenhouse gases from degraded peatlands that cause global warming, biodiversity loss, and destruction of habitats that protect endangered wildlife species.

Palm oil production is also implicated in violations of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and human rights abuses such as those described in the recent U.S. Customs actions.

Indigenous people often don’t have titles for the land where they’ve lived for generations. Villagers are then pushed off the land when the government gives it to palm oil companies.

The industry’s failings were what made it so surprising to me when I talked to Malaysians. All but a few were either indifferent or supportive of the palm oil industry in Malaysia for providing jobs and improving the economy.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail recently said the livelihoods of approximately three million people depend on palm oil production in Malaysia.

While the RSPO strives for palm oil “sustainability” in the industry, after 16 years it’s still difficult for a layperson to understand what “sustainability” for palm oil actually means.

Only about one-fifth of all the palm oil producers belong to the RSPO and have little incentive to adhere to the industry group’s goals.

Three-quarters of the RSPO’s 16-member Board of Governors represent the industry’s financial interests: palm oil growers (4); processors or traders (2); consumer goods manufacturers (2); retailers (2); and banks or investors (2).

Two seats are reserved for environmental and nature conservation groups, and the remaining two by social development organizations.

It was rainy season in Sabah and the dull, damp, gray sky intensified the solid green hue of palm oil tree fronds carpeting the rolling hills stretching toward distant horizons in every direction. Not long ago these same lands were native jungle, home to many animal and insect species.

I had taken a seat in a van for the two-hour trip from Sandakan to Sukau, a village deep in the jungle along the Kinabatangan River where seeing orangutans and other

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Orangutans *continued from previous page*

native animals in the wild was promising.

My driver was Mr. Choy, a stocky, good-humored Chinese man with a wispy goatee of long, black hairs so sparse you could count them from a distance one at a time.

On one section of the rain-slicked road, once-productive palm oil trees lie destroyed and mulched, having outgrown their usefulness over 25-30 years when the heavy bunches of palm oil kernels grew too high to be easily harvested. Seedlings were planted in their place and 30 to 48 months later they will be ready to bear fruit.

Mr. Choy said the government-built road on which we traveled through the plantations made it easier to transport the harvested palm kernels to collection areas, where they are weighed, recorded, and sent to processing centers where the oil is extracted.

Palm oil is merely an extension of the economic evolutionary process in Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Mr. Choy said. "Before palm, cacao; before cacao, rubber. Now palm oil is in our cars, biodiesel, less smoke."

A young Muslim woman in a traditional hijab whom I met on a shuttle van from Lahad Datu to the Danum Valley Conservation Center, the heart of one of the last untouched native forests remaining in Borneo, I thought might provide a different perspective.

She was on her way to continue her graduate studies of the Danum Valley's river systems. I thought sure that finally I'd found someone who would protest the human rights abuses and loss of her country's native forests and wildlife.

But I was wrong.

After introducing ourselves, I turned the conversation to my interest in palm oil. But she wouldn't be drawn into criticism of her government or the palm oil industry. I pointedly asked how she could reconcile what's happening with her environmental work.

Jobs, she replied, are vitally important to people and the economy in her country.

Behind my cabin in Sukau, a small village on the muddy Kinabatangan River in central Sabah, were palm oil trees lined up neatly in rows, less than 50 meters (164 feet) from the riverbank.

In front of my cabin, monkeys played and ate the fruits of the native trees growing on my homestay grounds.

Butterflies flitted around. The air was



Palm oil kernels at a collection center in Sukau, Sabah, Malaysia, where the fruit is collected and forwarded to processing facilities to extract the valuable oil.

still, saturated with moisture from overnight rains being drawn back into the clouds by the hot midday sun.

It was there at the Sukau River Homestay where I'd come to see orangutans in the wild. The remote location was one of the more likely places I might have this special opportunity, and it was the primary goal I'd set for myself on this visit to Malaysia.

I met Asley Amit, 30, whose sister managed the homestay, and found them to be a ray of sunshine in a changing world where others were unwilling to see the light.

Tourism was actually growing here, Amit said, with about 5,000 visitors arriving in peak season (June to September), and he was helping the family establish a new homestay nearby.

On a short boat ride upriver I found orangutans in the wild, high among the forest canopy over the banks of the river, swinging from branch to branch, building a new nest for sleep that night, a daily task for orangutans.

The forests were getting smaller day by day, however, Amit acknowledged. Wildlife in the area was being squeezed into the narrow, remaining corridor of native jungle between the river and the burgeoning plantations.

Most of his neighbors, however, were still selling their lands to plantations for

quick profits.

While Amit preaches conservation and tourism as a better way of life, many of his neighbors are not thinking that far ahead, he said. "They are turning their own land into palm oil, not good."

Amit spoke cautiously, in measured terms, about his role as naturalist and tourist guide, and the prospects for survival in such an environment.

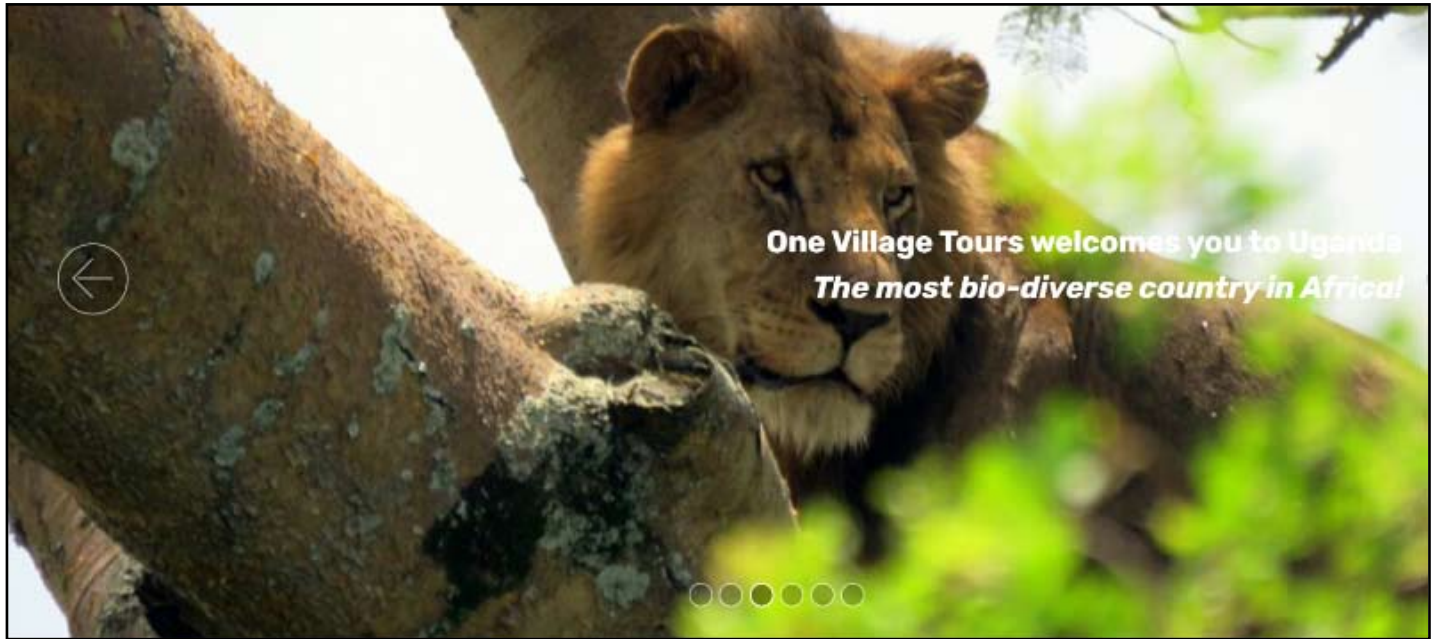
"We are providing education and teaching (about) orangutan forests for tourists. I was born here, I saw the environment changing. The populations of elephants, orangutans, birds, are all decreasing as the habitat shrinks. We encourage people not to plant palm oil, but to develop tourism like my sister. Local people get the benefit."

Amit and his brother Musarapa, 26, are now setting the example in their community by working on a microlevel for conservation and tourism, pushing back against the lure of easy palm oil money.

"Reforestation is providing new areas, sanctuaries are growing. In the future there will be something happening," he said with a glint of hope.

Still, local people succumb to the big companies. "They only see easy money," said Amit. "We hope in the future they open their own homestay."

Human Interest



One Village Tours welcomes you to Uganda
The most bio-diverse country in Africa!

Photo Courtesy One Village Tours, Uganda

Even the iconic African lion may be facing extinction in the wild. In 2015, as a result of decades of hunting, disease, and habitat loss, only 23,000 lions remained in Africa's vast savannas: less than 10% of what roamed there in 1950. There are fewer lions today.

Destroying the Web Of Life: The Destruction of Earth's Biodiversity Is Accelerating – OpEd

Submitted by Bill Boteler, Maryland USA

Subject line: *Deeply concerning*

Message: *I just don't give up but feel like we need a way to mobilize more people for the Earth and not just climate – to create an alternate paradigm for meeting human needs outside of materialism and capitalism – and quickly.*

By Robert J. Burrowes, Australia
January 18, 2021

In August 2010, the secretary-general of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Ahmed Djoghlaif, warned that, “We are losing biodiversity at an unprecedented rate.” According to the UN Environment Program, “the Earth is in the midst of a mass extinction of life” with scientists estimating that “150-200 species of plant, insect, bird, and mammal become extinct every 24 hours,” which is nearly 1,000 times the ‘natural’ or ‘background’ rate. Moreover, it “is greater than anything the world has experienced since the vanishing of the dinosaurs nearly 65 million years ago.” See ‘Protect nature for world economic security, warns UN biodiversity chief’ at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/aug/16/nature-eco->

conomic-security.

Two months later, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held from 18 to 29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan, a revised and updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for the 2011-2020 period was adopted. See ‘Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including Aichi Biodiversity Targets’ at <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>.

You can read the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets on the Convention’s website. They were ambitious but represented a realistic assessment of what needed to be achieved by 2020 if national governments were to achieve the longer term goal of ‘Living in Harmony with Nature’ by 2050. The 2050 Vision for Biodiversity required ‘a significant shift away from “business as usual” across a broad range of human activities. See ‘Global Biodiversity Outlook 5’ at <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>.

So how have we done in the past 10 years?

In 2015, distinguished conservationists Professor Gerardo Ceballos, Anne H. Ehrlich, and Professor Paul R. Ehrlich published their book titled *The Annihila-*

tion of Nature: Human Extinction of Birds and Mammals, which tells the story of humanity’s “massive and escalating assault on all living things on this planet” precipitating what is now Earth’s sixth great mass extinction: “a time of darkness for our planet’s birds and mammals.”

Noting that the roots of this destruction “run deep through time” with human hunting and other activities responsible for pushing populations of animals to extinction long before the agricultural revolution (which began about 10,000 years ago), they observe that the current collective assault on animals, plants, and microbes has reached a level so horrendous that “any alarm call we might sound will be too faint to match the tragedy that is unfolding.” But while the decimation of life that is currently underway is being caused by *Homo sapiens*, the consequences of this decimation will also have impact on humanity itself because the life-forms being annihilated are “working parts of life-support systems on which civilization depends.”

Despite the impressive statistics that record the demise of life on Earth and the fundamental threat this extinction crisis poses, Ceballos and the Ehrlichs are well

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Photo Courtesy One Village Tours, Uganda

What is driving the sixth mass extinction? Homo sapiens. And the key tool is always destruction of habitat, whether on land or in the ocean.

aware that the public and politicians generally are not reacting emotionally to this crisis as do those who are 'deeply familiar with the impoverishment of nature.' They hope we can relate to the fate of the last Spix's macaw, a male that searched fruitlessly for a mate until it disappeared from the savannah of northeastern Brazil in 2000.

And did you know that even the iconic African lion may be facing extinction in the wild? In 2015, as a result of decades of hunting, disease, and habitat loss, only 23,000 lions remained in Africa's vast savannahs: less than 10% of what roamed there in 1950. There are fewer lions today.

But separately from species extinctions, Earth continues to experience 'a huge episode of population declines and extirpations, which will have negative cascading consequences on ecosystem functioning and services vital to sustaining civilization.'

In a 2017 report, Professor Ceballos and his coauthors describe what they label a "biological annihilation" to highlight the current magnitude of Earth's ongoing sixth major extinction event. Moreover, local population extinctions 'are orders of magnitude more frequent than species extinctions. Population extinctions, however, are a prelude to species extinctions, so Earth's sixth mass extinction episode has proceeded further than most assume.' See 'Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines' at <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/30/E6089>.

Beyond even this, however, many additional species are now trapped in a feedback loop that will inevitably precipitate their extinction as well because of the way in which 'co-extinctions,' 'localized extinctions,' and 'extinction cascades' work once initiated and as has already occurred in almost all ecosystem contexts. See the (so far) six-part series 'Our Vanishing World' at <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2020/03/our-vanishing-world-part-6-oceans/>.

Have you seen a flock of birds of any size recently? A butterfly?

What Is Driving the Sixth Mass Extinction?

Homo sapiens. And the key tool is always destruction of habitat, whether on land or in the ocean.

Of course, particular human behaviors have a huge impact. Fighting wars (or even just wasting resources to manufacture weapons and other military infrastructure) is one (particularly given that the perpetual war in which the U.S. is engaged to secure resources and markets), destroying the climate is another, and deploying 5G is yet another. But there are many other destructive human behaviors, too.

Consider the forests. Just last year, 6.5 million hectares (16 million acres) of pristine forest were cut or burnt down for purposes such as clearing land to establish cattle farms so that many people can eat cheap hamburgers, mining (much of

it illegal) for a variety of minerals (such as gold, silver, copper, coltan, cassiterite, and diamonds), and logging to produce woodchips so that some people can buy cheap paper (including cheap toilet paper). See 'Our Vanishing World: Rainforests' at <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2019/08/our-vanishing-world-part-1-rainforests/>.

One outcome of this destruction is that 40,000 tropical tree species are now threatened with extinction. In addition, rainforest destruction is also the primary cause of species extinctions globally given the number of species that live in rainforests. See 'Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' at <https://www.ipbes.net/news/million-threatened-species-thirteen-questions-answers>.

Another outcome is that 'the precious Amazon is teetering on the edge of functional destruction and, with it, so are we.' See 'Amazon Tipping Point: Last Chance for Action' at <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/12/eaba2949.full>.

And in relation to another major habitat that is being destroyed, consider the world's oceans. In summary, the oceans are warming, acidifying, and deoxygenating; being contaminated with nuclear radiation, by offshore oil and gas drilling as well as oil spills; being damaged by deep sea mining; being polluted by industrial (including chemical) and farming wastes while being damaged in a myriad other ways and being overfished.

In short: the oceans are under siege on a
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Photo Courtesy One Village Tours, Uganda

According to the UN Environment Program, “the Earth is in the midst of a mass extinction of life” with scientists estimating that “150-200 species of plant, insect, bird, and mammal become extinct every 24 hours,” which is nearly 1,000 times the ‘natural’ or ‘background’ rate.

vast range of fronts and are effectively ‘dying’. For a comprehensive 18-point summary, see ‘Our Vanishing World: Oceans’ (link above).

If you like, you can read comprehensive summaries of the fate of Earth’s birds and insects, too. See ‘Our Vanishing World: Birds’ at <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2019/12/our-vanishing-world-part-5-birds/> and ‘Our Vanishing World: Insects’ at <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2019/11/our-vanishing-world-part-3-insects/>.

What Is the State of Play in Early 2021?

In a report published by the Inter-governmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in May 2020, the authors observe that, “Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely.” With a total estimated number of animal and plant species on Earth of 8 million (of which 5.5 million are insect species), an accelerating daily extinction rate combined with an ongoing decline in ecosystem health, the report concludes that 1,000,000 species of life on Earth are threatened with extinction. See ‘Nature’s Dangerous Decline “Unprece-

dent-ed”; Species Extinction Rates “Accelerating” at <https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment> and ‘A million threatened species? Thirteen questions and answers’ at <https://www.ipbes.net/news/million-threatened-species-thirteen-questions-answers>.

And the latest edition of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s flagship publication ‘Global Biodiversity Outlook 5’ (link above) was published on 18 August 2020. It reports that, “Humanity stands at a crossroads with regard to the legacy it leaves to future generations. Biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate, and the pressures driving this decline are intensifying. None of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be fully met.”

But this is an understatement, to put it politely.

In their commentary on this predicament in November 2020, scholars Ruchi Shroff and Carla Ramos Cortés note that, “Despite wide-spread international calls to curb the sixth mass extinction, no single goal of the Convention of Biological Diversity’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for the second consecutive decade, have been met. In some cases, biodiversity loss has been made worse as no action has been taken to curb pesticide use, pollution, fossil fuels, and plastics.’ See ‘The Biodiversity Paradigm: Building Resilience for Human

and Environmental Health’ at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41301-020-00260-2>.

But the destruction is far worse than suggested by this. Given, as already noted above, the ongoing destruction of rainforests and oceans, not to mention other habitats ranging from wetlands to deserts, the annihilation of life on Earth continues to accelerate with no indicators signaling that this destruction is being slowed in any way.

Therefore, destruction of biodiversity remains one of the four primary paths to human extinction (along with nuclear war, the deployment of 5G, and the climate catastrophe).

Is It too Late to Do Anything?

It might be. As mentioned above: Because many species are now trapped in a feedback loop that will inevitably precipitate their extinction because of the way in which ‘co-extinctions’, ‘localized extinctions’, and ‘extinction cascades’ work once initiated, many further extinctions are now inevitable.

However, we can take action to save those individuals and species not yet trapped in a feedback loop and that might yet be saved. But if you wait for governments or corporations to act responsibly,

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Photo Courtesy One Village Tours, Uganda

Local population extinctions 'are orders of magnitude more frequent than species extinctions. Population extinctions, however, are a prelude to species extinctions, so Earth's sixth mass extinction episode has proceeded further than most assume.

you will wait in vain as the last 20 years has demonstrated.

So you have some powerful options to consider. The first, and most important, is to consider the ways in which you can reduce your own consumption. The planetary environment is only being destroyed so that governments and corporations can respond to consumer demand. Everything from military spending and war to the extraction and burning of fossil fuels are fundamentally driven by what you buy. And each and every item that you buy has a negative environmental impact. There are no exceptions.

If you reduce your own consumption and increase your self-reliance, you will reduce the burden that extraction, transport, manufacture, and distribution of resources imposes on the natural environment resulting in the destruction of habitat and the annihilation of biodiversity.

One option to consider is 'The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth' which outlines a graduated series of steps for reducing consumption and increasing self-reliance. You can see this at <https://dkeenan.com/Flametree.pdf>.

If you want to better understand why so many human beings are addicted to endless consumption, see 'Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence, and War' at <https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/key-articles/love-denied/>. There is more detail on the origins of this behav-

ior in 'Why Violence?' (<https://dkeenan.com/RJB-WhyViolence.pdf>) and 'Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice' (<https://anitamckone.wordpress.com/articles-2/fearless-and-fearful-psychology/>).

If you are inclined to campaign to defend biodiversity in one context or another, whether by campaigning to end war, halt the climate catastrophe, stop the deployment of 5G, or end wildlife trafficking for example, consider doing so strategically. See 'Nonviolent Campaign Strategy' (<https://nonviolentstrategy.wordpress.com/>).

You might also consider signing the online pledge of 'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World' (<https://thepoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/>) [Note from the Editor: The Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice has signed on to this.]

Or, if the options above seem too complicated, consider committing to:

THE EARTH PLEDGE

Out of love for the Earth and all of its creatures, and my respect for their needs, from this day onwards I pledge that:

1. I will listen deeply to children. See 'Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening' (<https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/nisteling/>).

2. I will not travel by plane.

3. I will not travel by car.

4. I will not eat meat and fish.

5. I will only eat organically/biodynamically grown food.

6. I will minimize the amount of fresh water I use, including by minimizing my ownership and use of electronic devices.

7. I will not own or use a mobile (cell) phone.

8. I will not buy rainforest timber.

9. I will not buy or use single-use plastic, such as bags, bottles, containers, cups, and straws.

10. I will not use banks, superannuation (pension) funds or insurance companies that provide any service to corporations involved in fossil fuels, nuclear power, and/or weapons.

11. I will not accept employment from, or invest in, any organization that supports or participates in the exploitation of fellow human beings or profits from killing and/or destruction of the biosphere.

12. I will not get news from the corporate media (mainstream newspapers, television, radio, Google, Facebook, Twitter...).

13. I will make the effort to learn a skill, such as food gardening or sewing, that makes me more self-reliant.

14. I will gently encourage my family and friends to consider signing this pledge.

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Photo Courtesy Eurasia Review

According to the UN Environment Program, “the Earth is in the midst of a mass extinction of life” with scientists estimating that “150-200 species of plant, insect, bird and mammal become extinct every 24 hours,” which is nearly 1,000 times the ‘natural’ or ‘background’ rate.

Conclusion

One species – Homo sapiens – is annihilating life on Earth, driving at least 200 species to extinction each day. In the time it took you to read this article, another species of life on Earth vanished into the fossil record.

This annihilation of life is driven by our over-consumption. As Mahatma Gandhi, already wearing his own homespun cloth, noted more than 100 years ago, “Earth provides enough for every person’s need but not for every person’s greed.”

Of course, many people around the world are not responsible for over-con-

suming; they live life on its margins, with barely enough to eat, let alone thrive. And this reflects inequities built into a global economic system that prioritizes profit for the few, not resources for living for all.

So that means that the burden for reducing consumption must fall on those in industrialized societies who benefit from the maldistribution of planetary resources.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once noted that, “The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization.”

If we are to prove him wrong, we do not have much time left.

This is because Homo Sapiens is a part of the web of life. And we are ruthlessly

destroying that web.

Robert J. Burrowes has a lifetime commitment to understanding and ending human violence. He has done extensive research since 1966 in an effort to understand why human beings are violent and has been a nonviolent activist since 1981. He is the author of ‘Why Violence?’ (link above) . His email address is flametree@riseup.net and his website is at <http://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com>.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/18012021-destroying-the-web-of-life-the-destruction-of-earths-biodiversity-is-accelerating-oped/>

BE THE MOST ETHICAL, THE MOST RESPONSIBLE, THE MOST AUTHENTIC YOU CAN BE WITH EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, BECAUSE YOU ARE CUTTING A PATH INTO TOMORROW THAT OTHERS WILL FOLLOW.

~ Ken Wilber ~

<https://loveexpands.com/quotes/ken-wilber-638389/>

Human Interest

Excerpt From a Wonderful Book

By Derrick Jensen
A Language Older Than Words, pp. 98-100

And so we grasp all the more recklessly, demand all the more strenuously, never now slaking thirst nor sating hunger. The circle of necessary control grows wider, the hold grows tighter, until the objects once loved are hated for the shreds of their remaining independence, the perceived unwillingness to conform to the precise and impossible accommodation of our ever-changing wishes which could grant us satisfaction, give us peace.

We sense that this control of others is futile, perhaps, and yet we act upon the unacknowledged belief that to realize this control and quiet our fears we must affect all those we encounter that do not reflect our imagined dominance, silence them, deny their subjective existence, and ultimately, kill them.

At this point there can be no respite for the hungry and thirsty save death, which will come too soon for those controlled and never soon enough for those who control.

Fearing death, fearing life, fearing love, and fearing most of all the loss of control, we create social rules and institutions that mirror our fears and reinforce our destructive behaviors.

Having surrounded ourselves with images of ourselves, and having silenced all others, we can now pretend that the false-front world we've created is instead the world we've been given.

We can pretend the world is a very dangerous place, where dogs eat dogs, where children and others must be beaten into submission, where a fierce struggle takes place in which only the strongest, meanest, most unethical and hateful survive, and ultimately where we die alone and afraid. Any threat to this illusion must be anni-

hilated before it reminds us of what we've lost, what we've destroyed, and of what could have been.

And so we kill all witnesses: the vast flocks of passenger pigeons; the islands of great auks; the massive herds of bison; the great forests; each and every nonhierarchical and peaceful indigenous culture; each and every new child, wild and beautiful and free and creative as she is; even our own consciences and direct experiences of the world.

No matter how we try, we cannot eradicate every vestige of life and love. Each new child – human, plant, animal, stone, or star – offers a new possibility, and each new encounter an opportunity for communion, however great or slight.

Just yesterday I drove to the grocery store to pull boxes of scraps from the dumpster. As I worked I noticed a man sitting on a curb, watching. His clothes were old, ill-fitting, and torn, his shoes falling apart. I couldn't tell his age; the bottle, in a brown paper bag, from which he drank may have aged him ten years, or maybe twenty-five. I finished the boxes, and got in the truck. We made eye contact, and nodded. He stood and walked toward me. "Do you get food out of there?"

Homeless people ask me that all the time. Had I pulled anything of value, I would have given it to him.

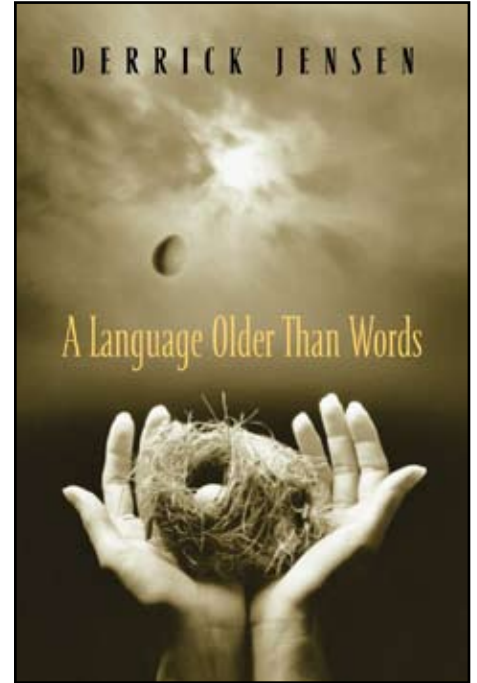
"Sometimes. Today I just got lettuce leaves."

He thought for a moment, looked away, then looked back to me. He reached in his pocket and said, "Can I donate a couple of bucks so you can get some food?"

Communion. "No thanks," I said, "The lettuce is for my chickens." I smiled, and he smiled back.

"Thanks," I said, "Thanks so much."

Things don't have to be the way they are.



At once a beautifully poetic memoir and an exploration of the various ways we live in the world, *A Language Older than Words* explains violence as a pathology that touches every aspect of our lives, and indeed affects all aspects of life on Earth.

This chronicle of a young man's drive to transcend domestic abuse offers a challenging look at our worldwide sense of community, and how we can make things better.

This narrative moves elegantly between the microcosm of the author's dysfunctional family and the macrocosm of History. Readers are initiated into the stifling world of child and spousal abuse, and then beyond, where Jensen finds the same dynamics tricked out on the grand stage of Western civilization. The prose is as lyrical and cogent as it is convincing.

Available at <https://derrickjensen.org/purchase/#language-older-thanwords>.

CONTINUE TO BE WHO AND HOW YOU ARE, TO ASTONISH
A MEAN WORLD WITH YOUR ACTS OF KINDNESS.

~ Maya Angelou ~

<https://gratefulness.org/word-for-the-day/continue-to-be-who-and-how-you-are-to-astonish-a-mean-world-with-your-acts-of-kindness/>

Human Interest

Beneath and Beyond Cards Draw You Deeper into Yourself, Others, and Nature



Beneath & Beyond

Cards for reflection and conversations about our relationship to this Earth, loved ones, friends, and to ourselves.

Created by Derrick Jensen and Fiona Corke

Beneath and Beyond...all of our beliefs, our social structures; Beneath and Beyond who we believe we are; Beneath and Beyond our questions are answers if only we knew how to really listen.

One hundred, double-sided cards, 196 questions plus introduction. The "Beneath" questions are on the black side and the "Beyond" questions are on the white side.

"Our hope is that these cards can be a useful guide in discovering more about ourselves and our place in the world and in the lives of others, both human and nonhuman. And our desire is that these questions may evoke reflection, conversation, and discussion about what's most important in our relationship to this Earth, to our friends and loved ones, and to ourselves.

Directions: Randomly pick a card and place it question up. Take some time to reflect on your answer. You may need to read the question a few times to let the words sink in.

To get the most benefit from the cards, avoid Yes or No answers, offer an explanation or reason for your belief, create a conversation.

Questions can be answered solo or with friends. They can also be used in group work, workshops, and teaching.

Iona's first card, white side: How many machines do you see daily? With how many machines do you have a daily relationship? Iona's answer: computer, cell phone, toaster oven, landline, cars. I think that's it = 4.

Black side: When are you happiest? Iona's answer: (Oh Gosh, what a fantastic question!) I could answer with typical things like being with my family or friends or swimming gleefully in the ocean or riding my bike on a Nature trail with my grandson, but my atypical answer is: I'm happiest when I'm creating this newspaper for you and also for me since it helps restore my faith in us, the grassroots activists of the world.

PayPal: \$24.50

Check or money order: \$23.50

Email: Derrick at derrick@derrickjensen.org. Shipping is included in the price for delivery in the U.S. but international shipping is extra; please check with Derrick to learn how much you'll need to add.

In Australia: \$29 plus \$9.50 for 1 to 3 sets anywhere in Australia. Contact Fiona at fiona.corke@hotmail.com. She has a paypalme secure payment account which she will provide when you order.



"If we wish to stop the atrocities, we need merely to step away from isolation. There is a whole world waiting for us, ready to welcome us home."

- Derrick Jensen -

An interview with Derrick Jensen

By Dave Oswald Mitchell, *excerpt*
Briarpatch: August 1, 2008

Derrick Jensen has been called the philosopher poet of the ecological movement. His books include *The Culture of Make Believe*, the two-volume *Endgame*, and most recently *How Shall I Live My Life?: On Liberating the Earth from Civilization*. Common to all his work is a fierce commitment to expose the roots of the violence and destruction that underpin the comforts and privileges of civilization....

In March of this year, Derrick Jensen joined a Regina, Saskatchewan, audience via videoconference for a wide-ranging conversation. As usual, he challenged the audience to focus on protecting life rather than lifestyle, and urged them to recognize the breadth of the changes necessary to protect life on Earth.

Source: <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/its-tremendous-fun-to-fight-back-an-interview-with-derrick-jensen>



Iona Starting Mary Kay Business

I have been using many Mary Kay products and am very happy with them. I especially like the face, feet, and hand creams. I hope you'll give them a try. The e-catalogue is at <https://www.marykay.com/en-us/tips-and-trends/makeover-and-beauty-tools/ecatalog>. Any purchases you make will help sustain this newspaper. My personal website is www.marykay.com/IonaConner. Thank you for your support.

Consumer Liberation

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

Our Slogan: The way forward: cycle back to basics.

Email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net and she will put you on our email list. "Every new one makes us stronger," sings Pete Seeger.



Groundswell News

Our beautiful journal will inspire and encourage you. Learn more at www.groundswellnews.org. Email groundswellnews@pa.net to be put on our e-list. It's free but donations are gladly accepted. A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice. Photo <https://www.google.com/search>

Groundswell News Now Accepting Ads

Please consider placing your ad with us. Send me your material at groundswellnews@pa.net and pay what you feel is reasonable, depending on how much space your ad needs. If your ad requires some of my time to create it for you, there will be an extra charge. If you can afford \$50 for half a page and \$100 for a full page, that will be wonderful.

Thank you.



Remember your dreams.



Messages from Our Friends

(For many, English is not their native language.)



(Responses to my 1/14 cover email questions)
Hello Iona,

You might have seen the attached extracts from *The Guardian*. In case you haven't, I thought you could use the information. A lot of very good articles to see there! Most of it bad news, I'm afraid.

Your newsletter is really first class. Keep up the good work! (I do think it is a bit too voluminous, though. I wonder how many of your readers have the time and patience to read the entire thing.)

Anders Eklof, Sweden

OK, enjoy my responses.

Maybe a combination of original stories and only the best stuff gleaned from print media. Original stories alone might be pretty slim.

I think you are combining your interests, that might not be the same for your readers: environment and Africa.

The donation page is a great idea, since you haven't been able to set up subscription renewals. You'll have to include cute little, graphic reminders elsewhere in the paper.

Yes! Drop out of Facebook. I've heard totally divorcing Facebook is very hard to do, technically. They have it set up so you almost can't. You have hit on the perfect compromise – use it only for business.

C.B., Pennsylvania USA

Mexico's a fascinating country. Have you spent any time here? I am variously enchanted and appalled with its beauty and humanitarian issues. High-level crime and corruption is rampant; the number of people murdered and "missing" is off the charts and sickening. Many of them are activists and journalists. Government/law enforcement are somehow powerless and likely complicit in this horrible tragedy.

On this trip, I chose to live in a neighborhood that is much poorer than the one I lived in previously. I knew it would be this way because it's close to the airport's runways. Planes take off and land close overhead, reminding me of my childhood when my family lived directly beneath the

flight paths of Philadelphia International Airport.

The diet of most Mexican people is generally poor and you can see it in the heavy stomachs falling over their belts of people, men and women, young and old. Although fresh fruits and vegetables are in abundance at low cost in the mom-and-pop *tiendas* in the neighborhoods, most local people are drawn to the deep-fried, white-flour street food, pizza, and other junky, processed foods. Good whole grain bread is impossible to find in this neighborhood, for example, while there is a wide variety of large, well-stocked supermarkets in the better-off neighborhoods I lived in on past trips.

Regardless, everywhere I go people are friendly, helpful, and kind despite what goes on. The harsher aspects of life seem to be lost on the majority of people as they go about their daily lives, and despite it all I enjoy living in Mexico. If nothing else, the weather is delightful and the countryside is fantastic, and I find myself returning often. Now I must get back to work on the article I promised you this week. (see pages 14-17)

I hope this Sunday is a beautiful day for you. Enjoy, life is good!

David Hunter Bishop, World-Traveling Nomad

Thank you, *Groundswell* for sharing with us. The republication is appreciated! ("Our Distance from Dirt," page 10 #72)

Boima, Africa is a Country,

Age discrimination in the workplace & in life is REAL and offensive!

I love it when a young person offers me a seat – that is good manners.

I hate it when I am asked – should you be doing that at YOUR age?

I give fair warning – as long as I can – I will!

I remember a quote from an old teacher: As I am, you will become: If God wills it. Growing older is a privilege – growing up is an option. Don't take the option! Keep your brain & body active; you will live

longer & have more fun!

We elders also have so much knowledge to share.

We are not a problem – we are a RE-SOURCE!

Remember too – you young people will face the same challenges as you age and more new tools are invented – so help fight discrimination in all its forms

Granny saying: When we treat everyone – whatever their viewpoint, their religion (or lack of religion) – whatever their job (or lack of a job), Man & Woman, Black & White. Rich or Poor, YOUNG or OLD – Disabled or not – Gay or straight – with the same level of courtesy & respect – then we respect them as our fellow human beings. We are respecting them & their Human Rights.

Valerie Wood-Gaiger, Learn with Grandma, Wales (posted on Facebook)

Available for change In West Africa
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1. Arctic ice disappears
2. Sea level rise is accelerating
3. Permafrost is melting
4. Tropical forests are collapsing
5. The glaciers are disappearing
6. Forest fires intensify
7. CO₂ emissions soar
8. Plastic pollution creates a 6th continent (plastic ocean)

COP25NonOfficialONG350CÔTED'IVOIRE

Ecobrik Challenge

An ecobrick is an empty, plastic bottle filled with used plastic (single-use pouch packaging) having a defined density to create a reusable building block, modular pavers, building briquette.

Ecobricks can be used to produce modular items including furniture, garden walls, classrooms, and other structures.

#sustainability #climateaction #education #plasticpollution #singleuseplastic
Video posted on FB with large class, Friday For Future Climate Strike Video projection in school Énergie fossiles vs Énergies Renouvelables.

Messages continued on next page

Messages *continued from previous page*

#ClimateStrike #FightClimateInjustice
#JustRecovery #FridayForFuture #Afrika-
Vuka Landry Ninteretse Chris B. Kif
[https://www.facebook.com/
watch/?v=3947042775313139](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3947042775313139)

Kone Issouf Pazini, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

(first email)

Hi Iona.

Trust the meeting went well and great news about endorsing the Charter.

In fact, organizations go on a separate page which I administer. So, all you need to do is tell me exactly what name you want to appear, confirm that you wanted it listed as an international network (rather than USA-based, and confirm that you should be listed as the contact. I will do the rest.

Anyway, welcome to the Grassroots Network as our latest endorsing organization of the Nonviolence Charter: the 119th organisation/network in 39 countries!

I will send a 'Welcome' message to your list when the name is listed, if you like!

Love; Robert Burrowes, Anita McKone, and Anahata Giri, Australia

(second email)

Dear Iona and all other friends in the Grassroots Coalition,

It was lovely to receive the endorsement (from your latest meeting) of the Grass-

roots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice for 'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World': Welcome!

We have now posted the entry of the Grassroots Coalition to the 'Organisations' page of the Charter website. You can see the entry under 'International' here: <http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/organisations/>.

The Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice is the 119th organization in the world to endorse the Nonviolence Charter.

Hopefully, the Nonviolence Charter will play some small part in drawing attention to your fine work.

We send out six-monthly progress reports to all signatories and organizations in 106 countries (so far) each April and October and look forward to including the fine work of the Grassroots Coalition in these reports, which are also published.

We still have a long and difficult road ahead of us but we get to work with the greatest people from all over the world!

And welcome, as well, to those of you from the Grassroots Coalition who have recently signed as individuals: Mary Catherine Bunting and David T. Van Etten. (If others wish to sign as individuals, you can do so from the link above: just click on 'Sign Charter' in the sidebar.)

Anyway, we look forward to continuing

to work with you in our shared efforts to end violence and make our world one of peace, justice, and sustainability.

Love to you all.

For a world without violence,
Robert J. Burrowes, Anita McKone, and
Anahata Giri, Australia

Email: flametree@riseup.net

Websites:

Nonviolence Charter

<https://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/>

Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth

<https://tinyurl.com/flametree>

'Why Violence?'

<https://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>

Feelings First

<https://feelingsfirstblog.wordpress.com/>

Nonviolent Campaign Strategy

<https://nonviolentstrategy.wordpress.com/>

Nonviolent Defense/Liberation Strategy

<https://nonviolentliberationstrategy.wordpress.com/>

Anita: Songs of Nonviolence

<https://anitamckone.wordpress.com>

Anahata: One Heart Yoga

<https://oneheartyyoga.com.au/>

Robert

<https://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com/>

Global Nonviolence Network

<https://globalnonviolencenetwork.wordpress.com/>



Bouquet by Maryann Daurio, New Jersey USA

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| PLACE STAMP HERE |
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Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice
c/o Iona Conner
2170 Route 88
Brick, New Jersey 08724

Fold on dotted lines and tape edges.

YES! I want to support *Groundswell News Journal* and its mission of continuing to be a beautiful, inspiring, uplifting publication, which educates and enlightens people about the climate crisis through scientific articles and stories by and about activists who are working to protect life on Earth and preserve natural resources, especially in Africa. All donations are gratefully received. Please use this page to enclose a check or money order payable to "Grassroots Coalition." You can also make donations though PayPal using groundswellnews@pa.net. Thank you from my heart! Iona Conner

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