

Earth Speaks

Volume 1: August 9, 2024

www.ionaconner.com

Brick, New Jersey Climate Café

By Iona
August 4, 2024

After reading Greta Thunberg's *The Climate Book*, I knew I couldn't keep relaxing. I had seen the term "Resilience Café" on a website similar to Facebook called Deep Transition Network (DTN). Unlike Facebook, the people who use this site are potential world changers and don't post family photos and trivia. These are intelligent, compassionate people; I enjoy sending and receiving messages to and from them.

I wasn't wild about the term "resilience" and decide to go simply with "Climate Café" and to keep this effort primarily limited to the land and water in my hometown of Brick, New Jersey.

There is a page on DTN named "Do-Ables" where we can post things that the average person can do. Even though I worked extremely hard thinking about how to start this group up, I discovered that lots of people do it more easily, therefore more readily copyable. I want this to be copyable, especially in the United States.

I made a list of "How To's" for DTN and posted this:

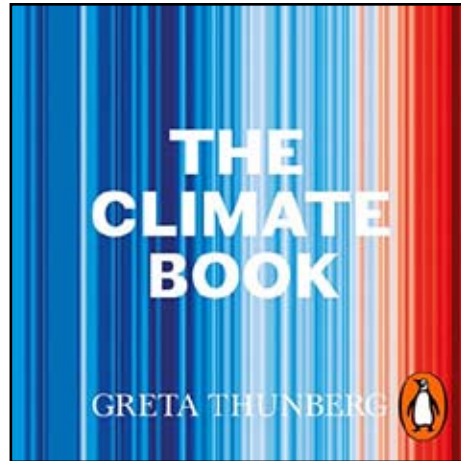
STEPS TO STARTING CLIMATE CAFÉS... STEP BY STEP

STEP ONE: Do a lot of thinking and reading. (Hopefully that is Do-Able or maybe you've already done it?)

After reading Greta's book, I made a list of the other books I had read, most of which I bought used:

The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach by my friend Robert J. Burrows

Fulcrum: Generational World



Transformation by my friend and DTN member David Pinto

Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television by Jerry Mander

Creating a Climate for Change: Communicating Climate Change and Facilitating Social Change edited by Susanne C. Moser and Lisa Dilling (new, was a gift)

The Theory of the Leisure Class by Thorstein Veblen

The END of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream is Moving by Leigh Gallagher

The Language of Trees: A Rewilding of Literature and Landscape by Katie Holten

The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light by Paul Bogard

Pay It Forward by Catherine Ryan Hyde (I also watched the movie; this is what I'm hoping people who attend Climate Cafés will do.)

Because I have not had a TV for about 40 years, I do a lot of reading instead. I was going to ask the library to buy a copy of each book for our work but they're so formal that I changed my mind. I will be my own library and loan my books to people who show up,

despite the risk of losing them. Once these books have done their job of hopefully getting people to read serious things, these books can go out into the world; they do no good sitting in my bookcase. I notice on Zoom meetings that most people whose homes are visible, have enormous collections of books. Why not send them out to do some good if you're done with them?

I forgot "Adbusters." I discovered them long ago and subscribed recently. I love them!

STEP TWO: Get to know who in your local government is working on environmental issues. Go to their meetings and listen. Find out what's going on.

STEP THREE: Ditto environmental groups and people who care about the Earth in your hometown. Call or email them and tell them what you're doing and ask if they would like to help you get started.

STEP THREE continued: Focus entirely on your hometown. For the start-up, ignore regional, state, national, and international groups/people. Stick with your town folks. As we grow, we can extend our reach and make partnerships but for now, we need to work hard to get this idea off the ground locally.

STEP FOUR: Make a decision to use "nature-based solutions" to the climate crisis, not technology which continues to destroy the Earth. Learn about Deep Ecology if you're unfamiliar with it.

STEP FIVE: Think about your goal, strategy, tactics even though you realize that when the group has formed, this may change but hopefully not drastically. Be clear and concise.

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STEP SIX: Meet with the Mayor. She or he will probably suggest good people to contact; mine did, so I have contacted each one and they are all supportive.

STEP SEVEN: Establish a place to meet which is central, well-known, and large enough for your group. I may have made a mistake by filling in the “Equipment” part of the local library application by only asking for 4 tables and 16 chairs but judging by the responses I get when I’m talking about it, maybe our launch will be better attended than that.

STEP EIGHT: Write a press release and send it to local papers about a week prior to the event or earlier if it’s a weekly paper.

STEP NINE: Create attractive flyers you can post everywhere with a coffee cup, some art about the Earth, and basic information. Then print out as many as you think you need and get a friend to help you post them around town, chatting it up everywhere.

STEP TEN: Create the initial Agenda and make copies for everyone.

STEP ELEVEN: Order or arrange coffee and donuts or “whatever.”

SIGNING OFF: This is as far as

I’ve gotten and I’m going to be busy running the first meeting and finding others to coordinate the activities we choose to start with so I won’t be posting these anymore. I’m making a unilateral decision to focus on trees first, the river second. Now that I found an excellent website about Climate Cafés, you can use their experience and ideas to lead you on your way to success: www.climate.cafe. Wish me luck and I wish you luck, too!

PS I did all this work without realizing that there is an official group with wonderful ideas about Climate Cafés. I had no idea the name was registered, so I’ll rely on the Fair Use law (below) to allow me to continue.

What is a Climate Café®?

A Climate Café® is a welcoming, informal pop-up space in a community – or a workplace, campus, or school – to get together to chat and act on climate change.

A Climate Café® is an inclusive space where everyone is welcome to join the conversation and get involved. There is no need to be an expert, all perspectives are welcomed!

Community led, often the #Climate-Cafe chat can be local in focus, but may

be global too!

A Climate Café® is a relaxed space, non-party-political, and not for profit. All the chat and any action is led by those who live, work, and play in that community.

Climate Café® Coordinators organize the space, drinks, and make sure it is a safe, accessible space for everyone to feel comfortable.

Every day people get together to chat about things that matter to them and what to do about them, a Climate Café® is just creating that space to chat and act on climate.

In communities, work places, or on campuses, a monthly Climate Café® can be a place to get together for a regular chat and update on climate ideas and action.

Climate Cafés® often choose to get together for 90 minutes to 2 hours, and many like to bring in contributors to inform and inspire the chat and action. Some choose to profile guests for every gathering, while others choose to have more time to chat.

There is no training required to create space in your community to chat and act on climate. . .

Source: <https://www.climate.cafe/>

Fair Use Symbol

<https://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>



Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances.

Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of

uses – such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research – as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of the following:

(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes. . . .

How to Subscribe

Dear Friends,

If you’d like to receive future issues of my newspaper, please email me at grassrootscoalition@pa.net. Also, email me if you have stories and photos you’d like me to consider publishing in future issues. I publish a Messages page similar to Letters to the Editor, so if you want to share your thoughts, please do so.

I’d like this to be a team effort as it has been in

the past, but we need time to develop this project and figure out ways to work together.

This is a labor of love but I always appreciate donations, which you can send to: Iona Conner, 157 Chambersbridge Road 4A, Brick, NJ 08723. If you use Zelle or PayPal, money goes directly to my bank account via dosomething@pa.net. Cash is OK, too. Thank you!

For the Earth,

Iona





Clayton Park in rural Upper Freehold is located amidst the rolling farmland of Western Monmouth County. The property is known for stately stands of red and white oak, beech, ash, and birch trees. Photo Courtesy Old-Growth Forest Network and Monmouth County Parks System

Protecting Climate Forests is Easy Climate Win

Email from EarthJustice, July 18, 2024

Dear Iona,

Mature and old-growth forests are also known as “climate forests” because they remove and absorb large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. This makes them a natural climate solution that simultaneously provides vital refuges for many at-risk species and vulnerable wildlife.

The U.S. Forest Service has proposed a policy that could reduce the logging and destruction of old-growth trees in national forests, but it needs to be dramatically strengthened before it is finalized. The Forest Service also needs to issue strong protections for mature trees, which are our future old-growth forests and exist in much greater numbers than old-growth.

Together, we have urged the administration to protect mature and old-

growth forests to address our climate and biodiversity crises and we need to keep the pressure on. We need the administration to commit to strengthening the proposed protections for old growth in national forests and also protect mature trees across federal lands from logging. **There’s a comment period open now until September 20th that needs your input.**

Safeguarding and expanding carbon-rich forests on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands is one of the most important, cost-effective, and immediately available strategies to fight the climate crisis. Older trees accumulate and store enormous amounts of carbon over many centuries and provide vital wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air, and mitigation for floods and droughts. Larger, older trees are also more fire resistant.*

The Forest Service’s new proposal rightly recognizes the importance of mature and old-growth forests, but doesn’t do enough to keep them from being cut down and sent to the mill. Protecting them is the direction federal forest management needs to move in.

We need to ensure mature and old-growth trees and forests on federal lands remain in place to mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity, and continue providing their natural benefits for future generations.

Comment at: <https://earthjustice.org/action/protect-our-oldest-forests>

Sincerely,

Blaine Miller-McFeeley

Senior Legislative Representative

***Note from Iona:** Remember, trees are living beings with every right to live.

Revolution

Imagine the World YOU Want to Live In

Note from Iona: I love this story so much that I'm publishing it for the fifth time. I feel it's imperative to keep our spirits up and our mind focused on the beautiful future we're all working so hard for, each in our own way. I urge you not to be discouraged. Sometimes I am and sometimes I'm sad and sometimes I wonder if this little newspaper really helps anyone, but I carry on with hope in my heart. I will not give up. May Surnai's vision brighten your life.

By Surnai Ó Maoildhia, Ireland
Parabola: Spring 2020

There came a time when the square concrete slabs sitting heavy along the suburban streets were pried up with crowbars and the squashed soil beneath sucked in the fresh air and people knelt down along the stretches of dark earth and said Sorry.

There came a time when all of the lightbulbs in each of the streetlights in each of the streets were unscrewed. And in the night the stars shone down unblinded.

The bricks of derelict houses were pulled from tired walls by many sets of hands and were stacked, like the building blocks of children, in wheelbarrows, to be wheeled away and used again.

Then the foundations of the lonely houses crumbled and were swept away and soil flew in on the breeze carrying dandelion seeds with it, and those many hands with soil in the curves of their fingerprints placed tiny seeds in tiny pressed hollows that grew to be oak and sycamore and birch and ash.

The black smoke that once wheezed from car exhausts and chimneys and seeped up into the sky, staining the white clouds dark, was now only in



“And the flowers are nourished by that same light, the flowers that were planted in the ground and in boxes and baskets and on rooftops and in the old bulbs of streetlights hanging upside down from loops of twine. The same light that’s sprinkled like sugar onto the fields and fields of daisies, fields bursting with daisies,” writes the author. Photo: <https://stock.adobe.com/uk/>

the burning of fallen branches on beaches from bonfires, and the smoke was grey, not black, and the red sparks wove within it a fiery embroidery that sparkled beneath the unveiled stars.

The trees that lived in their circles in the pavement in the cities now stretched their roots out, stretched the length of them, stretched long and lovely and intoxicatingly as all that concrete was changed to loose earth and so the roots could uncoil and the trees could stand steady.

And in this time, this time that came, on Sunday mornings, people went to the sea and knelt and saw the waves swell against the cliffs or lap against the stones or soak into the sand. They went to the forest and knelt and

looked at the trees shiver, shake, and lose themselves in the wind. They went to the mountains and knelt and watched, straining their eyes to see the breaths in the earth of the mountains, the mountains that breathe so slowly in their millennial meditation that one cannot see the rise and fall.

And above this breathing, above this spiralling of roots and trickling of water in the hollows in the soil, and alongside the curling of the waves and amidst the frolicking of the dandelion seeds, is the turning, turning, turning of bicycle wheels as people make their way through their day, to the sea or to work or play or school...

To school where children have risen
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from beds to kneel against rows of different beds and gently pluck out weeds and water the seedlings and the growing bulbs, and place potatoes in their patterns and name each one before they bury them...

To school where children solve puzzles with simultaneous equations and build contraptions with blueprints and nimble fingers and then discover the workings of plants, animals, atoms, space, and the rhythms of a story as they read and read and read...

To school where children fill the halls with music and the foot-stomping of dancing and the pounding of running feet and the careful breathing of yoga and meditation as they learn to stretch their limbs and minds and where to stretch them so as to get the most light...

The light that fruit and vegetables have used to swell and ripen, to be gathered then in baskets on bicycles or pooled in cloth bags, and the soil is brushed off with fingers and the slugs are placed outside and the vegetables, each one a different shape, are chopped and cooked.

And the flowers are nourished by that same light, the flowers that were planted in the ground and in boxes and baskets and on rooftops and in the old bulbs of streetlights hanging upside down from loops of twine. The same light that's sprinkled like sugar onto the fields and fields of daisies, fields bursting with daisies, trimmed with pink and centered by their own little suns, and if you look quickly, especially at dusk, it is only pink you see; oh, but how can you only glance? Of all the standards of beauty, there is nothing more lovely than a field full of daisies...

And in a house where all the windows are open a bumble bee has found himself trapped and a young girl sees him and gasps and she runs for a glass. And following him on tiptoe through the different rooms of the home, she finally moves the glass over him and places a book on the end and shifts the buzzing bee, buzzing, buzzing, buzzing, into the garden where he swoops up into the air, pauses, buzzes, and swoops again and disappears.

And though the girl can't see – but can imagine – the bee moseys over miles of green grass, dotted with pockets of gardens and houses and trees, and the bee crisscrosses with swallows who have tuned the sounds of spring to summer with the forks of their tails. And the bee pauses on a sunflower planted in a stretch of space that was once a graveyard, and is still, but the rectangles of gravel and the squares of headstones have been swapped with shrubs and flowers and so bluebells grow from the bodies and the memories of lost ones, who are not truly lost, simply shifted, and their names are painted on pebbles that have been moved from the shore.

And all of that rubbish that dropped from all of those cluttered lives, the rubbish that could not decompose, that could not die – immortal – heaped on top of nature, smothering; and then on top of itself, piling, over and over, minute after minute, until it leaked into the cracks in the planet, filling the gaps and then overflowing until it spilled and spilled into all of the bellies of all of the whales, cleared. It was cleared.

And there came a time when the ocean released that breath it had been holding and eased down a few inches.

And the wounds in the sky were allowed to heal and knit back together and dolphins could sew their threads through the clean, blue waters again.

And there came a time when the treetops were patched up and noisy again and orangutans collected their armfuls of fruit again and all that crumbling, wilting, dying turned to growth and the world was fresh and clean, as after a spring rain.

And the poles became solid once more.

And the famine ended.

And people learned to love this nature.

Loved it wholly and completely and unconditionally. And they learned that they are not excluded, that they are nature too. And the indomitable nature within them loved the uncontrollable-ness, the insuppressible-ness, the irrepressible-ness...loved the wildness of it all, the mess and the chaos; they learned to love the life in it, the life in them, in us, the organic, circular movement of everything.

And we learned to say, Sorry.

Surnai Ó Maoildhia was raised on Inis Mór, a small island off the west coast of Ireland, She was homeschooled there along with her siblings. Homeschooling is certainly a way to encourage creativity. Her parents ran an organic garden and housed volunteers. She is currently living in Scotland and about to begin her second semester of a Masters degree in Modern and Contemporary Literature at St. Andrews University. It's an old university in a very beautiful seaside town. [email received January 14, 2023] "Thank you so much for choosing to include my story again in your wonderful newspaper – I'm honoured and very grateful."

**It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it then,
that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds.**

~ Black Elk ~



Ramblin' Sol' Organic farm stand is at the Brick Farmer's Market every Saturday from 8:30 to 1:00. All this beautiful food and plants (plants sold in May) are grown by Joey Soto and Hannah Conner with a little help from their 3-year-old daughter EmmyLou. Photo Courtesy Ramblin' Sol Farm.

Of Motherhood and Farming

By Hannah Conner
Ramblin' Sol Farm: July 19, 2024

I sat in the driver's seat of our Toyota Tacoma, looking into the back. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes all piled up around my child; I was trying not to cry. There she was with a smile on her face despite our rocky morning trying to get out the door on time for our delivery. I was trying to push away the somewhat irrational fear of her being crushed by an unsteady box of zucchini, trying to stop feeling sorry for myself when I know other people have it so much worse, trying to just keep it together.

'Falta' is the word that kept playing over and over in my head. It's what we use in the field to explain to each other what is left of a task. Falta or lack-

ing, is the feeling I just couldn't push away. Farming seems to be an amplified version of motherhood. I've often blamed the farm for my postpartum struggle because it brought even more painful worry, guilt, and sleeplessness during a time I needed support.

Our week continued with a trip to the emergency room for Joey Wednesday night, ending with the awkward insurance conversation that was just the final straw. Why do we have to give up everything because we want to grow some food for our neighbors?

During the Rutgers class tour last week, a student stopped us at some point and asked something like, "But it's food, why is it so hard?" It is sort of ridiculous that serving a basic need can turn your life upside-down and sets you up to be some sort of unintentional rebel.

We didn't understand at the time we started, but being in control of your health and food has great power and so there is much to lose.

We thought this 5th growing season would bring a lot of satisfaction and peace. We had a better distribution plan, employees so that we could better manage the business, better irrigation, and an adjusted crop plan for our hotter seasons. The universe had other plans for us, but we are still here, still fighting, still comforted by the community support and cheered by the beauty we wake up to every morning.

Thank you for believing in us and being a part of protecting this land that nourishes us all. Next week will be a little better.

We will be at Brick Farmer's Market Saturdays at Windward Beach Park.



Sand and gravel mining in Nevada, USA. Photo: Bureau of Land Management Nevada

Coastal Restoration: Saving Sand

Deep Green Resistance News Service
July 26, 2024

DGR Editor's note: *It's a coast – not a beach – we forget that when our society talks about going to the beach. A beach is for basking in the sun, getting a drink, and dabbling in the water. But a coast is far more than an entertainment place for humans, it's a habitat for a variety of animals and plants.*

Sand mining is a threat to these ecosystems and criminals operate it illegally. Construction companies need sand for their concrete as the demand for buildings soars. They seal the planet by destroying coastlines – and beaches.

While beaches are being stolen in poor places, they are being nourished (replenished) in wealthy places. Beach nourishment is the process of placing additional sediment on a beach or in the nearshore. A wider and higher beach can provide storm protection for coastal structures. Sediment is commonly dredged offshore and pumped directly onto the beach, dumped nearshore by a hopper dredge, or occasionally sourced from an inland location.

It is an exercise in futility that destroys natural ecosystems and subsidizes wealthy beachfront homeowners at taxpayers' expense, particularly as worsening storms resulting from climate change demand investment in more permanent solutions to beach erosion. The sea level will rise and people living there will have to move.

It is time to stop building infrastructure and trying to control nature.

By Melissa Gaskill
The Revelator: July 15, 2024

Increasing demand for this seemingly abundant and common material harms human and natural communities – and fuels a lucrative and dangerous illegal industry.

Coastal ecosystems – including oyster reefs, sandy beaches, mangrove forests, and seagrass beds – provide important habitat for marine life and food and recreation for people. They also protect shorelines from waves and storms. But these precious systems face serious threats. This article looks at what put them at risk, along with examples of efforts to restore and

protect important coastal ecosystems around the world.

We Need to Talk About Sand

Most people don't realize that these humble grains – that ubiquitous stuff of vacations, ant farms, and hourglasses – are the second-most used natural resource in the world after water. According to a 2019 report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), we use more than 55 billion tons of it per year – nearly 40 pounds per person per day.

And a lot of that sand comes from illegal activity, involving criminal gangs who mine, smuggle, and kill for the precious material.

The Building Blocks of Modern Society

Sand – legal or otherwise – gets used to enhance beaches, extract petroleum through hydraulic fracking, fill land under buildings, and make computer chips.

But the biggest amount by far – an estimated 85% of the sand mined globally – goes into making concrete.

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Concrete combines two key ingredients: cement, a binding agent made from calcium or other substances, and aggregate, which is either sand or a combination of sand and gravel. Quality concrete requires jagged and angular aggregate grains – a quality found in only a tiny fraction of the world's sand, most of it on beaches and in rivers. This sand also is easy and cheap to mine, and it's located close to much of the construction taking place around the world.

According to UNEP, world consumption of aggregate for all uses exceeds 40 billion metric tons (44 billion U.S. tons) a year – an estimate that's likely on the conservative side and represents about twice the amount of sediment carried annually by all the world's rivers. (Sediment from land rocks is the source of most coastal sand, which also comes from shells and marine organisms pulverized by waves, the digestive tracts of coral-eating fish, and the remains of tiny creatures called *foraminifera*.)

Not surprisingly, UNEP calls management of sand one of the greatest sustainability challenges of the 21st century.

The organization also warns about sand mining's serious consequences for humans and the natural environment.

Removing beach sand leaves coastal structures more vulnerable to erosion even as climate change raises sea levels and makes storms more intense. Transporting sand generates carbon dioxide emissions. Sand mining has political and cultural consequences, including effects on the tourism industry, and creates noise and air pollution.

Coastal sand mining also destroys complex ecosystems. The microorganisms, crabs, and clams that live in beach sand are important food sources for birds. Sea turtles and several bird species nest on sandy beaches. Seagrass, an important food source and habitat for marine residents, needs

sandy ocean floor to grow. Stretches of underwater sand provide habitat for sea stars, sea cucumbers, conchs, and other critters, and are feeding grounds for flounder, rays, fish, and sharks.

Removing sand also affects water quality in the ocean and depletes groundwater.

Stolen Sand

Yet this harm is not the only issue. Increasing demand for sand has created a vast illegal industry resembling the organized criminal drug trade, including the same violence, black markets, and piles of money – an estimated \$200 to \$350 billion a year. Of all the sand extracted globally every year, only about 15 billion metric tons are legally traded, according to a report from the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

Pascal Peduzzi, director of UNEP's Global Resource Information Database-Geneva, became aware of illegal sand mining when the Jamaican government asked UNEP in 2014 to find out why the island had a serious beach erosion problem.

"There was a lot we didn't know about sand extraction, including how much was being taken," he says.

Or from how many places: Sand is mined from coastal environments in at least 80 countries on six continents, according to the 2022 book *Vanishing Sands*, written by several geologists and other experts on coastal management and land rights.

The book outlines a litany of sand crimes, from seemingly small to massive. In Sardinia, Italy, airport officials have seized about 10 tons of sand over 10 years, much of it carried in thousands of individual half-quart bottles. In Morocco, criminals removed as many as 200 dump trucks of sand a day from massive dunes lining the Atlantic coast.

According to Africa's Institute for Security Studies, illegal sand mining in Morocco is run by a syndicate

second in size only to the country's drug mafia. It involves corrupt government and law enforcement officials and foreign companies. Much of the Moroccan sand, for example, ends up in buildings in Spain.

In India demand for sand tripled from 2000 to 2017, creating a market worth 150 billion rupees, just over \$2 billion. Multiple diverse and competing "sand mafias" run mining sites surrounded by armed private security guards. Their weapons likely are obtained illegally, given the difficult process of acquiring guns legally in India.

The NGO South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers, and People reports hundreds of deaths and injuries related to illegal sand mining in India each year, including citizens (adults and children), journalists, activists, government officials, and law enforcement.

There are similar stories in Bangladesh, Cambodia, elsewhere in Africa, and in the Caribbean – almost everywhere sandy coastal areas can be found.

How to Solve the Problem

UNEP has begun tackling the problem of sand mining, putting forth 10 recommendations that include creating international standards for extracting sand from the marine environment, reducing the use of sand by using substitutes, and recycling products made with sand.

While these recommendations target legal sand mining, more responsible management and reduced overall demand also should make illegal mining less lucrative and, therefore, less common.

"The good news is there's a long list of solutions," says Peduzzi. "We start by stopping the waste of sand. We can make the life of buildings longer by retrofitting them instead of knocking them down. Maybe change the use of a building over time, as a school first

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and then 50 years later, a place for elderly people. When a building needs to be destroyed, crush and reuse the concrete. Build with wood, bricks, adobe, and straw.”

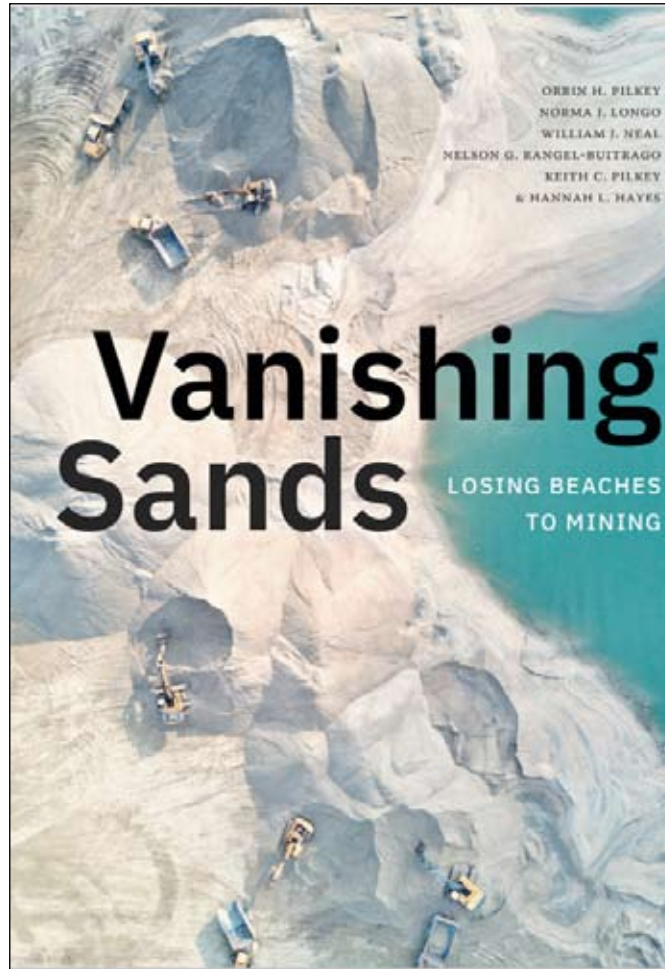
Building with straw also could reduce burning of crop waste. Every year, India produces 500 million tons of straw but burns 140 million tons as “excess.” One company there, Strawcture Eco, is using straw to create wall and ceiling panels that are fire resistant, insulating, and sustainable.

Alternatives to sand in concrete include ash from waste incineration and aluminum smelting waste. Peduzzi notes that ash creates concrete that is about 10% less solid, but points out, “that is still pretty good. You can use it to make buildings, but maybe not a bridge.”

The UNEP report notes that involvement from industry, the private sector, and civil society is vital in solving the problem. For example, shifting away from building with concrete will require changing the way architects and engineers are trained, acceptance by building owners, and new laws and regulations.

“We rely on sand, as a commodity,” Peduzzi says. “But we also need to realize its ecosystem services. We must be wiser about how we use it.”

UNEP hopes to collect solutions into a single, accessible online location (although it currently lacks funding for the effort). The idea is to create a hub for policies and technological solutions, Peduzzi says, and to develop best practices for them. The Global Initiative report on India also calls for a website for tracking illegal sand mining hosted by a think-tank or journalism agency – a sort of crime-spotters portal where people could anonymously upload evidence.



Shifting Sands, Shifting Thinking

William Neal, an emeritus professor at Grand Valley State University in Michigan and one of the authors of *Vanishing Sands*, suggests in an email that finding sand substitutes is not enough. Coastal communities, he says, need to retreat from rising seas rather than build more hard structures such as seawalls. This “shoreline engineering” often destroys the very beaches it is intended to save, he explains, and the long-term cost of saving property through engineering often ends up exceeding the value of the property. Seawalls also tend to simply shift water elsewhere, potentially causing flooding and significant damage along other parts of the shoreline.

Peduzzi also espouses shifts in thinking, including how we get around in cities.

“Instead of building roads for cars,

build subways,” he says. “That moves people faster and gets away from fossil fuels. The icing on the cake is that when digging subway tunnels, you are getting rocks, generating this material instead of using it. Cars are not sustainable – not the material to make a car itself or the roads and parking lots.”

Without systemic changes, the problem of sand removal is only going to grow bigger as the population increases and people continue to migrate from rural to urban areas, increasing the demand for infrastructure like roads and buildings.

“The problem has been overlooked,” Peduzzi warns. “People need to realize that sand is just another story of how dependent we are on natural resources for development.”

Melissa Gaskill is a freelance science writer based in Austin, Texas, whose work has appeared in Scientific American, Mental Floss, Newsweek, Alert Diver and many other publications. She is the co-author of A Worldwide Travel Guide to Sea Turtles and author of Pandas to Penguins: Ethical Encounters with Animals at Risk. The Revelator is an initiative of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Source: <https://dgrnewsservice.org/civilization/coastal-restoration-saving-sand/>

Note from Iona: I had no idea about this even though I have been in the environmental movement for 50+ years!

There is an incredible, powerful, 52-minute documentary at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJru_powbQg called “The Sand Mafia – Humanity is running out of SAND and it is a Huge Problem.”

If you love the ocean like I do, please watch this. I guarantee you’ll be stunned.

What's New? Allen Hengst's News Briefs Page

Note from Iona: Allen was our Wire Editor for many years, supplying stories and doing the final proofing of my various global warming newspapers. He has added emphasis to important words and phrases; we are publishing these briefs under the Fair Use law.

Sunday July 21 Was Hottest Day Ever Recorded on Earth

By Gloria Dickie, *excerpt*
Reuters: July 23, 2024

LONDON – Sunday, July 21 was the hottest day ever recorded, according to preliminary data from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, which has tracked such global weather patterns since 1940. The global average surface air temperature on Sunday reached 17.09° Celsius (62.76° Fahrenheit) – slightly higher than the previous record set last July of 17.08° C (62.74° F) – as heatwaves scorched large swathes of the United States, Europe, and Russia. . . .

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/world-registers-hottest-day-ever-recorded-july-21-monitor-says-2024-07-23/>

Phoenix Investigating 300 Heat-Related Deaths

By Patrick Smith, *excerpt*
NBC News: July 18, 2024

Over 300 deaths suspected to be linked to this summer's record-breaking heat wave are being investigated in a **single Arizona County**, official statistics showed Thursday morning. A heat report dashboard run by Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix and is the fourth most-populated county in the U.S., with 4.4 million people, showed 322 deaths are suspected to have been due to heat-related illnesses in the year to July 13 – a huge increase over last year. Almost 100 of those suspected heat deaths are attributed to a single week, from July 7 to 13, when temperatures reached 118 degrees. That came after parts of Arizona, Nevada, and Texas experienced

their hottest June on record. There have been 23 confirmed deaths in the county related to heat this year, the data shows, 17 of which were directly caused by heat and the six others of which were “heat-contributed. . . .”

Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/weather/300-suspected-heat-related-deaths-investigation-phoenix-area-rcna162465>

Antarctic Temperatures Soar 50 Degrees Above Normal

By Kasha Patel, *excerpt*
Washington Post: July 31, 2024

Ground temperatures in East Antarctica have soared more than 50 degrees (28 Celsius) above normal in the second major heat wave to afflict the region in the past two years. This historic warm spell could persist for another 10 days and is an **ominous** example of the major temperature spikes this polar climate could experience more frequently in a warming world.

“This heat wave is a near-record (or record) event for the region of Antarctica it's having the biggest impact on,” Edward Blanchard, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Washington, said in an email. “The heat wave's large footprint is also remarkable,” as it covers a large section of **East Antarctica**, which makes up most of the continent. . . .

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2024/07/31/antarctica-heat-wave-warming-climate/>

Gold Mining in Amazon Has Doubled Since 2018

By Fernanda Wenzel, *excerpt*
Mongabay:
July 26, 2024

In 2021, scientists and journalists got together to train

an artificial intelligence model on how to detect gold mines in the Amazon. One year later, they launched Amazon Mining Watch, a tool capable of using satellite imagery to identify the scars left by miners in the rainforest. Designed by the Pulitzer Center's Rainforest Investigations Network, the NGO Amazon Conservation, and Earth Genome, one of the main challenges of the initiative was the inevitable cloud **obscuring** images of the rainforest. “[Cloud cover] means that it's hard to get clear views of what's happening on the ground,” Edward Boyda, from Earth Genome, told Mongabay. “We look across the whole set of those images, 50 or so per year, and from those we collect the cloud-free ones.”

The endeavor was a success, but the picture they gained isn't good. According to the methodology, the area occupied by gold mines across the entire Amazon doubled from 2018 to 2023, going from 963,000 to 1.9 million hectares (2.4 million to 4.7 million acres). Researchers from the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) analyzed the data and concluded that most of the mines are located in Brazil (55%)....

Source: <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/07/gold-mining-in-the-amazon-has-doubled-in-area-since-2018-ai-tool-shows/>

Contact Allen at ahengst@verizon.net to be placed on either his Climate or Political (USA) email list – or both!



Gold mines are widespread in the Amazon Rainforest. Photo: MAAP



Where are all the butterflies?

Poem and photo by Violet Helleborine
<https://violethelleborine.substack.com>: July 26, 2024
 Pollinators need weeds.

*A field full of thistles
 On land set aside, flowers
 Laden with nectar as Nature
 Strives to rectify
 The deathly silence
 Yet no insects hum nearby.
 A mass of open flowers
 It's late July
 A beautiful warm day
 Sun at it's height, but
 Not a bird in sight,
 And where are all the butterflies?*

Messages from Our Friends

Comments on Climate Cafés

Hi Iona,

First, let me state that I feel humbled by what you have been doing, as I put it together by reading your website, and as the arc continues through the Café.

My experience with groups comes from being a therapist, finding ways to deal with complex issues. However, in real life, for peer groups, I would recommend simple formats. The simpler the format, the more transparent it is, and the more it conveys a sense of empowerment to all participants. So, it is a compliment when I describe the format Bruce follows, and the format that Larry follows, as simple.

A possible tweak you might consider is to ask people, before they state their opinion or point of view, to first summarize what the person before them has shared (and then check that the person feels accurately reflected).

- On the plus side, this gives people a great sense of feeling heard, and it allows everybody to digest what is being said instead of rushing from opinion to opinion.

- On the negative side, it can be more complicated than it sounds, and it may need a facilitator to train the group to practice this approach. So, if it feels difficult to put into place, just stick with the basics of giving everybody an opportunity to talk, through Bruce's "talking stick" approach and/or in breakout rooms as Larry does.

I send you heartfelt wishes for the success of this Café.

Anonymous

Climate Activist in DR Congo

Hello Dearest Iona,

I'm happy to read your article and I encourage you in this work of saving our planet. Indeed, I would like share our struggle to Save our people and planet.

We have launched FAITH PLANS for Peace, People and Planet. We are aware that many people around the world are members of a faith group, specifically in our region. So, the easy way to raise communities' awareness of climate issues is to collaborate mostly with churches' leaders, to preach them the ecological conversion so they can preach their followers this new Creation Evangelic, cfr *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis.

Recently, we met with the Catholic church leader of Goma to tell him about our project and request his collaboration for the implementation of this FAITH PLANS with five main components:

1. Land restoration and reforestation activities (to plant at least 10 millions trees in Goma diocese by 2030);
2. Energy Access and Clean Cook-

ing, to promote small power plants, solar and hydropower, to produce and distribute Improved Cooking stoves to households;

3. Environmental education and Ecological conversion in churches, schools, youth and women's groups;
4. Sanitation and Eco-spirituality; and
5. Women's empowerment and green entrepreneurship.

We hope that this program will help many vulnerable people to build resilience and adaptation capacity and fight against poverty. This is how we are helping to save our common house "Planate."

Let us get in contact with interested people to support this projects

Best regards and peace,

Leon Simweragi, DR Congo (*Association de Jeunes Visionnaires pour le Développement du Congo*, AJVDC Green Brigade/Congo). Photo below courtesy AJVDC

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Goma, DR Congo



Climate activist Leon Simweragi (to right of bishop) works with churches in DR Congo.