

Earth Speaks

Volume 2: October 31, 2024

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1. Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Chaos: Superior to technological solutions.
2. Consumer Liberation: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.
3. Chambers of Compassion: United for peace, justice, and compassion for the poor.

Brick, New Jersey Climate Café



BRICK CLIMATE CAFE

Logo by Lauren Lastimosa
Story by Iona

Part One

Our first Brick Climate Café was from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm September 25th. Here's what happened.

My press release was published in *The Brick Times* and my friend from the Brick Environmental Commission sent it to the *Asbury Park Press* and one other newspaper. I got so excited that I didn't bother to send it to the *Ocean Star*, figuring we'd be overwhelmed with people.

I ordered three boxes of coffee from Dunkin Donuts and two boxes of donut holes. I asked the library for 10 tables and 40 chairs. Three of us got there early to unload the tables and chairs and set up the coffee and donuts.

I thought an octagon shape would be friendlier than a rectangle so we positioned 8 tables in an octagon, one for coffee, and one for about a dozen books I had read relating to climate change, which I was offering for free.

Six o'clock came and there were six of us. That's it.

We had a dynamic meeting. Because there were so few of us, we were able to enjoy some important conversations. The two men from the Brick environmental team were phenomenal and taught us a lot about what's happening here in our hometown.

Lauren Lastimosa has a composting business called UN-WASTE (<http://www.unwastemovement.world/>). She created our logo plus an Instagram page for us: <https://www.instagram.com/brickclimatecafe/> She also created an email account for us: brickclimatecafe@gmail.com. Unfortunately, I don't know how to use either of these so I'm hoping someone will help me.

Part Two

Realizing that I needed to do more outreach, primarily in person, to different groups and re-think the press release options, I attended the October 22nd Environmental Commission meeting and gave them an update during the Open Comments period.

With the upcoming election, followed by Thanksgiving and then Christmas, I would resume my efforts in January.

Their meeting was really interesting and I was sorry that nobody else from the public was there to see how they are working hard on several issues. I was astonished to learn how much trash and large pieces of junk the Pick Up Brick volunteers had collected so far this year. Also, there was a tree planting event Sunday at Havens

Historic Museum in Brick on October 27 with 30 trees being donated by the local, community bank which is celebrating 150 years. As an aside, I love this bank and a small part of my climate activism is to boycott huge banks, which are funding destruction of the Earth.

Back on point, the bank has donated these 30 trees to the township. When concerns were raised about the current drought here, we were assured that an irrigation system is being installed on November 13th. Hopefully, these native tree species will thrive.

The day after the meeting I was doing a few errands and two beautiful trees had been taken down. I was furious and heartbroken. On hot summer days, I used to park under one of those trees while I was shopping. I wrote down the phone number for the man who owns the strip mall and left a message gently berating him for being so ignorant about the value and beauty of trees.

When preparing for the first Climate Café, I attended a meeting of Brick's Shade Tree Commission and told them about my ideas for saving trees here. One man said we need a massive educational program so that people will realize how beneficial trees are.

Coincidentally, around the same time, we had a heavy rain. I was on my way out to the food store and the puddles were so huge that I turned around. Being a shore community, flooding is a serious problem.

Hello! One Solution = Trees!!!

Please save trees wherever you are.

Brick Township Preserves More Open Space

Brick Township
Municipal Update:
The Official Email
Newsletter of the
Township of Brick,
October 9, 2024

The Brick Township Council has passed an ordinance to fund the purchase of 4.22 acres of land on Hooper Avenue adjacent to the Drum Point Sports Complex. The property, which had previously been approved for the development of six single-family residential lots, will now be preserved as open space. The Township plans to remove existing structures on the land and restore the property to its natural state as a forest.

“By restoring this property to its original condition, we are enhancing the environment around the Drum Point Sports Complex and ensuring it remains a community resource for generations to come,” said Mayor Lisa



Crate.

The Township expects to receive reimbursement for 75% of the acquisition costs through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Green Acres Program, which supports land preservation and recreational development throughout the state.

This acquisition continues the Township’s efforts to prioritize green spaces and enhance the quality of life

for residents. These efforts include the acquisition of 31 acres that had been approved for 59 single family homes in Breton Woods last year.

Mayor Crate thanks the members of the Brick Open Space Savers (BOSS) Committee for working with the administration to identify properties in the township for preservation.

The Township expects to close on the purchase of the property later this year. Photos by Iona.

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



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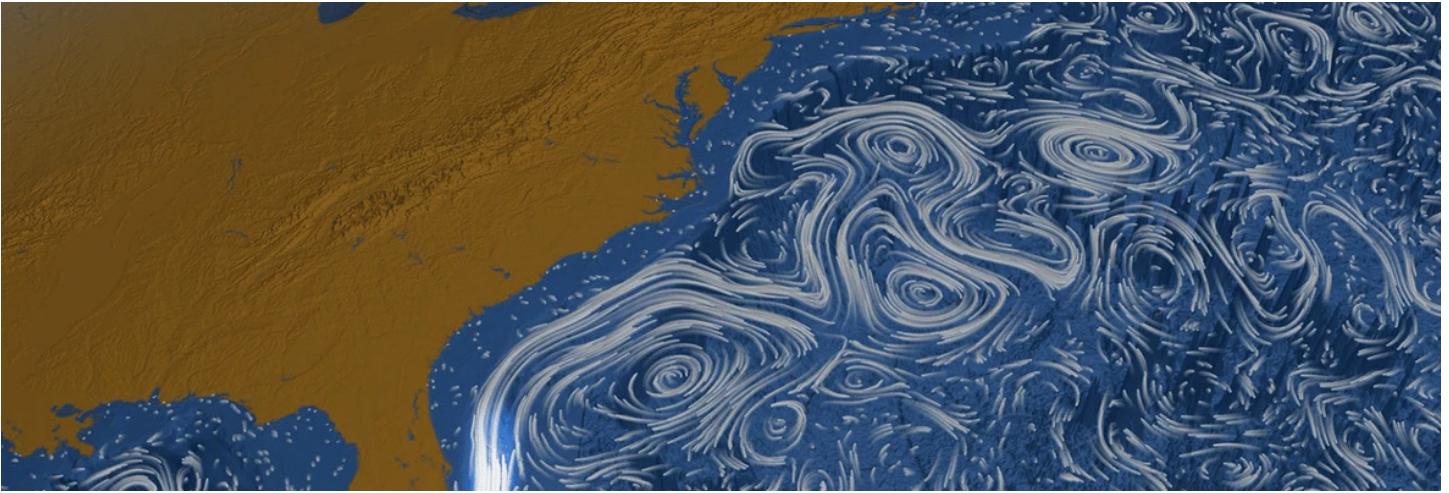


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Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of

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



Ocean currents are shown in the North Atlantic. Notice Florida toward the bottom and the Chesapeake Bay toward the top. Image: NOAA

‘Serious Risk’ of Vital Ocean Current Collapse by 2100, Warn Scientists

“A string of scientific studies in the past few years suggests that this risk has so far been greatly underestimated,” wrote scientists in a letter to Nordic governments.

By Olivia Rosane
Common Dreams: October 24, 2024

A group of 44 climate scientists from 15 different countries warn there is a “serious risk” that soaring global temperatures will trigger the “catastrophic” collapse of a crucial system of ocean currents – and possibly sooner than established estimates considered likely.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC, moves warm water up from the tropics to the North Atlantic, where it sinks and cools before returning south. It is, as letter signatory and oceanographer Stefan Rahmstorf told *The Guardian*, “One of our planet’s largest heat transport systems.” If it collapsed, it could lower temperatures in some parts of Europe by up to 30°C (86°F).

That’s why the scientists sent a letter to the Council of Nordic Ministers over the weekend urging them to take

action to understand and prevent a potential collapse.

“A string of scientific studies in the past few years suggests that this risk has so far been greatly underestimated,” the scientists wrote. “Such an ocean circulation change would have devastating and irreversible impacts especially for Nordic countries, but also for other parts of the world.”

In the letter, the scientists detailed some of the potential “catastrophic” impacts of such a collapse, including “major cooling” in northern Europe, extreme weather, and changes that would “potentially threaten the viability of agriculture in northwestern Europe.”

One study cited in the letter shows that London could cool by 10°C (50°F) and Bergen, Norway by 15°C (59°F).

“If Britain and Ireland become like northern Norway, (that) has tremendous consequences. Our finding is that this is not a low probability,” Peter Ditlevsen, a University of Copenhagen professor who signed the letter, told *Reuters*. “This is not something you easily adapt to.”

Globally, the scientists said, the end of AMOC could cause the ocean to absorb less carbon dioxide, thereby increasing its presence in the atmosphere. It could also further augment sea-level

rise along the U.S. Atlantic coast and alter tropical rainfall patterns.

The most recent synthesis report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expressed “medium confidence” that the current would not cease functioning before 2100. Since its publication in March 2023, however, a rash of studies have come out upping the risk.

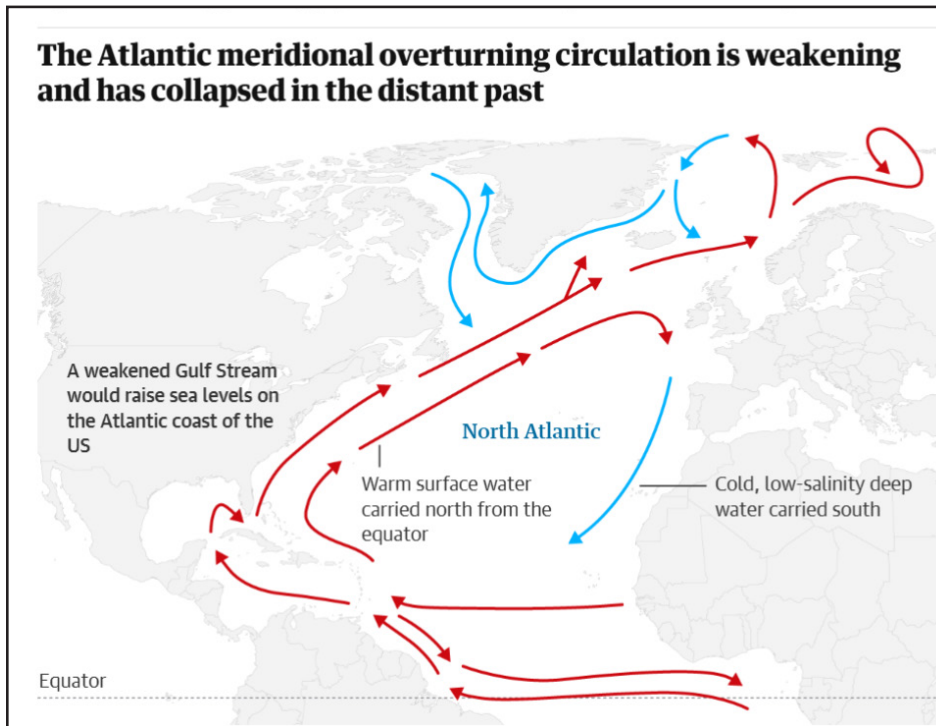
A *Nature Communications* study, also published last year, looked at 150 years of temperature data and determined with 95% confidence that AMOC would collapse between **2025** and 2095 if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise as currently predicted.

Another, published in *Science Advances* in February, concluded that AMOC was currently “on route to tipping.”

There are already signs that AMOC has begun to stall over the last six to seven decades, Rahmstorf told *The Guardian*, such as the cold blob in the North Atlantic that is defying global warming trends. The water in North Atlantic is also becoming less salty due to meltwater from the Greenland ice sheets and increased precipitation due to climate change. Less salty water is lighter and does not sink, interrupting the process that makes AMOC flow.

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Guardian graphic. Source: NOAA, S. Rahmstorf et al from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

“It is an amplifying feedback: As AMOC gets weaker, the subpolar oceans gets less salty, and as the oceans gets less salty then AMOC gets weaker,” Rahmstorf explained. “At a certain point this becomes a vicious circle which continues by itself until AMOC has died, even if we stop pushing the system with further emissions.”

“The big unknown here – the billion-dollar question – is how far away this tipping point is,” Rahmstorf said.

The scientists acknowledged that the chance of the AMOC tipping “remains highly uncertain.”

They continued:

The purpose of this letter is to draw attention to the fact that only ‘medium confidence’ in the AMOC not collapsing is not reassuring, and clearly leaves open the possibility of an AMOC collapse during this century. And there is even greater likelihood that a collapse is triggered this century but only fully plays out in the next.

Given the increasing evidence for a higher risk of an AMOC collapse, we believe it is of critical importance that Arctic tipping point risks, in particular the AMOC risk, are taken seriously in governance and policy. Even with a medium likelihood of

occurrence, given that the outcome would be catastrophic and impacting the entire world for centuries to come, we believe more needs to be done to minimize this risk.

To respond to this threat, the scientists urged the council – a group that includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland – to launch a study of the risk posed to these countries by an AMOC collapse and to take measures to counter that risk.

“This could involve leveraging the strong international standing of the Nordic countries to increase pressure for greater urgency and priority in the global effort to reduce emissions as quickly as possible, in order to stay close to the 1.5°C target set by the Paris agreement,” they wrote.

Johan Rockström, a letter signatory who leads the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, wrote on social media that global politics, “particularly in [the] Nordic region, can no longer exclude [the] risk of AMOC collapse.”

And there is one way that political leaders can stave off such a collapse, as well as other climate tipping points, according to Rahmstorf.

“This is all driven mainly by fossil fuel emissions and also deforestation, so both must be stopped,” he told *The Guardian*. “We must stick to the Paris agreement and limit global heating as close to 1.5°C as possible.”

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/scientists-warn-amoc-collapse>

Excerpt from interview by Jonathan Watts in *The Guardian* October 23, 2024 with Oceanographer Stefan Rahmstorf.

How does the AMOC threat compare to other climate tipping points?

We have already crossed the tipping point of many coral reefs, which are now in middle of global die-off. This is very depressing because it is al-

ready too late to do anything about it, though marine biologists have warned about the risks for a long time. The Amazon rainforest is also dangerously close to a tipping point. As we speak, it is going through the worst drought on record....

I am worried about all of these things to be honest. . . .

I don’t think it is my job to talk about my feelings, but I do have two

children and I am very worried about what future they will live in. I sometimes joke that physicists don’t have feelings. But even physicists care about their kids.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/oct/23/we-dont-know-where-the-tipping-point-is-climate-expert-on-potential-collapse-of-atlantic-circulation>

Mass Destruction of Nature Reaches International Criminal Court (ICC) as Pacific Island States Propose Recognition of “Ecocide” as International Crime.

Stop Ecocide International
September 9, 2024

Summary:

- Milestone for environmental justice as amendment proposed to the Rome Statute of the ICC to include a crime of ecocide.
- Vanuatu key sponsor of historic proposal to hold senior officials and decision-makers accountable and punishable for the most severe crimes against the environment.
- The ICC has international jurisdiction to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. Ecocide, if adopted, would become the fifth international crime.

NEW YORK – Today, the crime of ecocide was formally introduced for consideration by member states of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – an event that represents a major step forward in the global effort to enshrine mass environmental destruction as a crime under international law.

‘Ecocide,’ as proposed by Vanuatu, Fiji, and Samoa, is defined as “unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.” This definition emerged in 2021 from an Independent Expert Panel of top lawyers from around the world, convened by the Stop Ecocide Foundation, and has gained significant legal and political traction.

Established in 2002, the ICC is the only international tribunal with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals in positions of superior responsibility for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, or the crime of aggression. Under the



newly proposed ecocide legislation, such individuals could be held criminally accountable if their actions result in severe environmental damage, such as massive oil or chemical spills, the clearcutting of primary rainforests, or the destruction of entire river systems.

Professor Philippe Sands KC, Professor of Law at University College London and Co-chair of the Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide, said, “*There is a manifest gap in the Statute of the ICC, and Ecocide is now firmly on the agenda, a vital and necessary moment for an effective international law. This development reflects a growing recognition that severe environmental destruction deserves the same legal accountability as other grave international crimes that focus on the human. I urge member states to support this initiative, to recognize that the Rome Statute as drafted cannot ad-*

equately address environmental harms, and that this is a moment of generational change, one that is needed to safeguard our environment and signal to coming generations that the world is truly serious about doing so.”

Following notification of UN Secretary General António Guterres, a formal proposal to amend the Rome Statute to include the crime of ecocide has been submitted to the ICC Assembly’s Working Group on Amendments by member state Vanuatu – a low-lying archipelago of 80 islands in Oceania – and co-sponsored by fellow Pacific island nations Fiji and Samoa, reflecting the importance of environmental justice considerations for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Vanuatu was the first nation to call for international recognition of ecocide at the International Criminal Court in 2019.

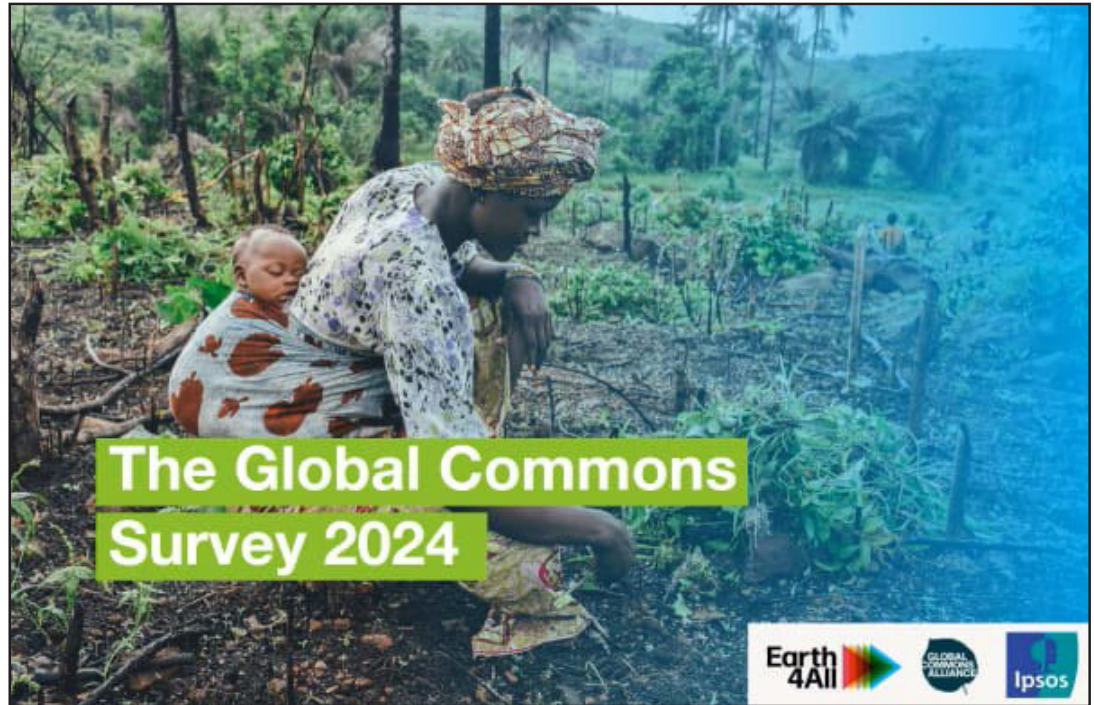
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The last 18 months have seen a wave of new ecocide legislation making progress at domestic and regional levels. At the start of 2024, Belgium introduced a national crime of ecocide, while the European Union included a ‘qualified’ offence in its newly revised Environmental Crime Directive to tackle ‘conduct comparable to ecocide.’ The Directive was adopted with 499 votes in the European Parliament in favor, 100 against, and 23 abstentions. New ecocide legislation is advancing in other countries, including Peru, Brazil, Scotland, Italy, and Mexico.

Significantly, last week, The Global Commons Survey 2024 – a new poll by Ipsos commissioned by Earth4All and the Global Commons Alliance – revealed that 72% of people in the world’s richest countries support ecocide law. Nearly three out of four people surveyed across G20 countries (excluding Russia) backed the criminalization of actions causing widespread, long-term, or irreversible harm to nature and climate.

Jojo Mehta, Co-founder and CEO of Stop Ecocide International, said: *“Introducing ecocide as an international crime is crucial because it holds those in positions of superior responsibility – senior executives and policymakers – accountable for decisions that could lead to severe environmental destruction. The primary goal is ultimately protective: it’s deterrence. Criminal law creates powerful moral as well as legal boundaries, making it clear that extreme levels of harm are not just unlawful but totally unacceptable. By establishing legal consequences, we create a guardrail that compels decision-makers to prioritize safety for people and planet, fundamentally*



altering how they approach their obligations. We also create a route to justice for the worst harms, whether they occur in times of conflict or in times of peace.”

The proposal to amend the Rome Statute comes at a critical point in the ICC’s history, which has faced international scrutiny in recent months, with U.S. lawmakers threatening sanctions after the court announced it was seeking arrest warrants for Israel’s highest officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, alongside Hamas’s leaders, over alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza conflict. The court has also issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin to member states, citing crimes against humanity committed during the conflict with Ukraine.

Ralph Regenvanu, Special Envoy for Climate Change and Environment for the Republic of Vanuatu, said, *“Environmental and climate loss and damage in Vanuatu is devastating our island economy, submerging our territory, and threatening livelihoods. This tragedy is not unique to Vanuatu but is shared by many small island nations that, despite bearing the least responsibility for the*

crisis, suffer most from its impacts.

“We are taking bold and necessary action to address these challenges and encourage other vulnerable states to take note of our newly tabled proposal to bring ecocide to the ICC. Vanuatu considers it imperative that the international community takes this conversation seriously, and we warmly invite all member states to engage. Legal recognition of severe and widespread environmental harm holds significant potential to ensure justice and, crucially, to deter further destruction.

“As the first nation to call for the inclusion of ecocide as a crime at the ICC in 2019, Vanuatu remains committed to addressing these critical issues at the highest level. We urge ICC member states to take note of the very substantial civil society support for this initiative around the world as it moves forward in this crucial discussion.”

Source: <https://www.stopecocide.earth/2024/mass-destruction-of-nature-reaches-international-criminal-court-icc-as-pacific-island-states-propose-recognition-of-ecocide-as-international-crime>

Photo: <https://earth4all.life/global-survey-2024/>

Tell Costco: Don't Trade the Boreal Forest for Toilet Paper!

Environment America

In the time it takes you to brush your teeth tonight, Canada's boreal forest will lose three football fields of trees.¹

It's alarming, but the culprit is softer than you think: We're watching the boreal disappear before our eyes in part because Costco uses boreal trees to make toilet paper.²

While forests that once sheltered caribou, elk, birds, and more are flushed away, we won't just roll with it. You don't have to either.

Help save the boreal forest by calling on Costco to use recycled or forest-free materials in its toilet paper.

Years ago, the tremendous boreal spanned 1.5 billion acres of forested lands – larger than all but six countries in the world.

These forested lands hosted wildlife large and small: On the ground, you could find Canadian lynx, snowshoe hare, and even wood bison. In the treetops and skies above, nearly half of all North American birds rely on the forest during migration.

And if you look even higher – up to our atmosphere – you'll find another important benefit. The boreal's trees are a carbon sink, soaking up enough carbon each year to offset the global warming pollution of 24 million cars.³

Now, back to Costco. Shelves lined with Kirkland signature toilet paper can't compare with the beauty and majesty of forested lands in the world's "northern lungs."

Costco sells a billion rolls of toilet paper each year. It's the company's best-selling item. Stacked on top of each other, those rolls would soar to heights of 300 million feet – the same as 240,000 Empire State Buildings.

But those rolls don't come from thin air. They're chopped from the boreal and flushed away to infinity.

It doesn't have to be this way. Other



companies already use perfectly suitable alternatives, such as recycled paper, bamboo, or even wheat straw.^{4,5} Costco is just as capable of making this change and protecting the boreal forest in the process. But the company needs to hear from you.

Tell Costco to make its Kirkland Signature tissue products from at least 50% recycled or forest-free materials and refuse to sell other brands of tissue products until they make the same change.

Take action at <https://environmentamerica.org/take-action/tell-costco-dont-trade-the-boreal-forest-for-toilet-paper/>

Here is the message that will be sent in your name with thousands of others:

Costco CEO Ron Vachris:

In the time it takes you to brush your teeth tonight, Canada's boreal will lose three football fields of forest.

Canada's boreal forest is irreplaceable. Home to caribou, wolves, lynx, elk, billions of migratory birds, and more – countless creatures rely on the forest staying intact to survive. Plus, the boreal's trees remove enough carbon from the air each year to offset 24 million cars.

Costco can help. I'm urging Costco to make its Kirkland Signature tissue

products from at least 50% recycled materials and refuse to sell other brands of tissue products until they implement the same change.

Thank you,
Lisa Frank, President

Footnotes:

1. Ryan Flanagan, "How a toilet paper boom is harming Canada's boreal forest," CTV News.

2. Mike Moffitt, "The fluffy toilet paper you are buying is helping kill Canada's ancient forest, study says," SFGATE.

3. Ryan Flanagan, "How a toilet paper boom is harming Canada's boreal forest," CTV News.

4. Adrian Humphreys, "U.S. plush toilet paper use wiping out Canada's forests, flushing away the future: report," *Vancouver Sun*.

5. "Issue with Tissue' Sustainability Scorecard Flunks Charmin and Other Toilet Paper Brands," *Business Wire*.

Donate today. A cleaner, greener future is within our reach. Your donation today can help us bring the vision we share a little closer to reality.

Environment America, Inc.
1543 Wazee Street, Suite 410, Denver, CO 80202, (303) 801-0581

Source: <https://environmentamerica.org/take-action/tell-costco-dont-trade-the-boreal-forest-for-toilet-paper>



China is Latest Country to Oppose EU Regulation to Track Deforestation

By Shreya Dasgupta
Mongabay: August 6, 2024
Submitted by Bill Boteler, USA

In a recent development, China has opposed the European Union’s landmark regulation to prevent deforestation-linked commodities from entering the EU market. This update comes from GD Holz, the German timber trade association.

The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) is designed to ensure that forest-related products that are sold in the EU market are deforestation-free. That is, producers and companies must ensure that commodities like timber, beef, palm oil, soy, coffee, cocoa, and rubber come from land that wasn’t deforested after December 31, 2020. They must do this by sharing geolocation coordinates that show the exact location and size of the areas where the commodities are grown.

However, China has reportedly rejected compliance with the EUDR, specifically refusing to share geolocation data, over security concerns.

“China’s laws may indeed restrict the sharing of ‘sensitive’ geolocation data with other governments. But what is deemed to be ‘sensitive’ is nebulous

and ill-defined,” Julian Oram, senior policy director at Mighty Earth, a climate advocacy group, told Mongabay in an email. “Given that China supplies the EU with nearly half its timber furniture and more than 40% of all paper boxes, it would clearly be in the interests of both sides to resolve this impasse swiftly.”

Much of China’s timber comes from tropical forests, such as those in the Congo Basin. The timber gets crafted into furniture and other products in Chinese factories, which is then exported to both the EU and the U.S.

The Congo Basin has the world’s second-largest expanse of rainforest after the Amazon, and is one of the largest carbon sinks in the world. But the region suffers from illegal logging and deforestation, previous investigations have found.

The EUDR was passed with strong backing from companies and NGOs. However, international political opposition has emerged against the implementation of the regulation, which is set to take effect starting December 30, 2024.

China now joins the U.S. in opposing the EUDR’s traceability requirements. In March of this year, 27 U.S.

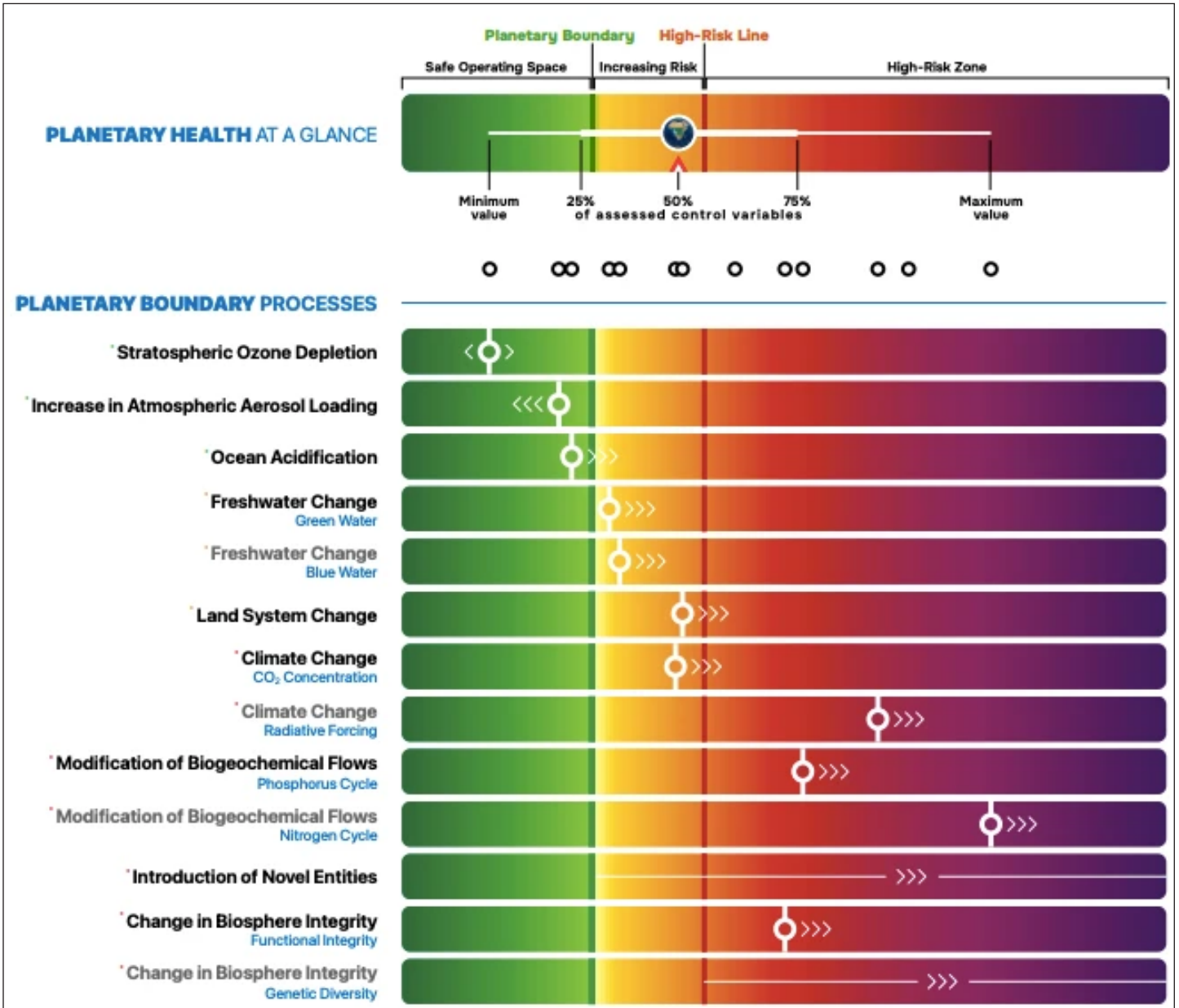
senators said meeting the EUDR’s geolocation requirement would be “nearly impossible” and could limit the \$3.5 billion forest product trade between the U.S. and Europe. Twenty out of 27 EU agriculture ministers, as well as countries like Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Indonesia, and Malaysia, have also expressed concern about the regulation.

However, Mighty Earth’s Oram said that despite the challenges, these regulations are urgently needed.

“Right now, thousands of hectares of forests are burning all around the world, much of which is being driven by continued agricultural expansion,” he said. “There is no time to wait or delay further. The need to break the link between Europe’s consumption of agricultural products and the worldwide destruction of nature is obvious and urgent.”

Source: <https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2024/08/china-is-latest-country-to-oppose-eu-regulation-to-track-deforestation/>

Banner image: Rhett Butler/Mongabay. Africa



Graphic shows the status of nine environmental categories, four of which have been broken down into two control variables. Image from Planetary Health Check 2024. Design by Globaia

‘Red Alert’ as 7th Planetary Boundary Breached

By Edward Carver
Common Dreams
September 24, 2024

Six of nine planetary boundaries have already been transgressed, and a seventh, for ocean acidification, is on the verge of being breached, according to a major report released Monday.

The 96-page report, produced by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), is the first in

a planned series of annual “planetary health checks.”

The authors found that safe planetary boundaries had already been crossed for the climate, freshwater, land use, biogeochemical flows, novel entities, and biosphere integrity – in keeping with a study in *Science Advances* last year. They found a “clear trend towards further transgression” – moving deeper into the danger zone, where irreversible tipping points are

more likely to be triggered – in each of the six categories.

“Our updated diagnosis shows that vital organs of the Earth system are weakening, leading to a loss of resilience and rising risks of crossing tipping points,” Levke Caesar, a PIK climate physicist lead author of the report, said in a statement that announced a “red alert.”

The health check also showed that

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ocean acidification, a seventh category, has reached a dangerous precipice, putting the foundations of the marine food web at risk. Ocean acidification, which can threaten coral reefs and phytoplankton populations, is caused by the buildup of carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels and other human activities.

Caesar said a “safe operating space” threshold for acidification could be crossed in the next few years.

“Looking at the current evolution, I’d say it’s really, really difficult to prevent that [boundary] crossing,” she told *Mongabay*.

PIK director Johan Rockström, a co-author of the new report, helped develop planetary boundary research in the late 2000s. In a seminal 2009 paper in *Nature*, he and his co-authors found that three of the nine boundaries had already been crossed. That number has gradually gone up based on a series of studies over the last decade.

The planet boundary framework, which is often connected to the degrowth movement, emphasizes that the categories are interconnected.

“The interconnectedness of [plan-

etary boundary] processes means that addressing one issue, such as limiting global warming to 1.5°C, requires tackling all of them collectively,” the new report says.

Boris Sakschewski, a climate scientist who, along with Caesar, is a lead author of the report said that, “We know that all planetary boundary processes act together and each one needs protection to protect the whole system.”

The consequences of continued ocean acidification, which is primarily measured by aragonite saturation, would be severe, the report warns.

Ocean acidification is approaching a critical threshold, with significant declines in surface aragonite saturation, particularly in high-latitude regions like the Arctic and Southern Ocean. These areas are vital for the marine carbon pump and global nutrient cycles, which support marine productivity, biodiversity, and global fisheries. The growing acidification poses an increasing threat to marine ecosystems, especially those reliant on calcium carbonate for shell formation.

Some researchers believe that the

ocean acidification threshold has already been crossed, especially given regional variability, with cooler polar waters absorbing more carbon dioxide, causing a faster drop in pH levels.

The report was written with a general audience in mind and is not peer-reviewed, though it’s based on peer-reviewed studies, the authors said.

The final pages of the report present solutions, especially agricultural. A radical overhaul of the global food system, heavily dependent on fertilizer and other harmful inputs, will be necessary to reverse the disturbing trends documented in the report, the authors wrote.

“Sometimes overlooked compared to the impacts of energy production and consumption – particularly the use of fossil fuels – the food systems we depend on are among the largest drivers of environmental degradation. **The global food system is the single largest driver behind the transgression of multiple planetary boundaries,**” the report says.

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/news/planetary-boundaries-red-alert>



Note from Iona: Seeing Turkey Vultures glide reminds me to do that, too. I love these birds. Wishing you some gliding in your busy life. Photo by Iona



Smoke seen from the town Iona's friends live in. Photo by Linda L.

Wildfires and Smoke in Idaho, USA: Part One

Interview with a friend who lived with smoke for three months from wildfires in Idaho.

He just wanted me to know...because so many people are now saying that there are so many fires and it is because of climate change. Yes, some of that that is true but not entirely. He says many things have changed in the firefighting business.

This is what has changed and why there are more fires here now and bigger fires. He is a retired logger. And when he was a logger working, all the loggers watched the forest. When there was a thunderstorm or lightning at night, the very next day every logger would get on their machines, cats, tractors, backhoes – whatever – and go out and find where the lightning had started fires or were smoldering and they would put them out. The loggers took care of the forests. This was the same with ranchers and farmers. Just like the loggers protecting the forest, the ranchers and farmers would go out and find the fires and disk the ground around the fires to help put the fires out. They were also protecting their land. This was their livelihood.

Then the federal government stepped in and started to tell loggers and ranchers or even individual homeowners that live near a fire, that they could not go out and put out fires because they hadn't been to fire school and weren't authorized! The government officials said the loggers weren't knowledgeable about how to stop fires and if they went out and tried to stop these fires that they would be fined millions of dollars. So, the loggers and ranchers stopped.

The forest service came in and of course they let fires smolder and grow before they started to put them out. Sometimes it is because they cannot get a crew to a fire area on time. It may take several days because they may be in different states fighting other fires. But still, people could help get these fires put out!

When the fires near us started (one was spotted and burned for two to three days before any government firefighters came!!!). After two days the fire was about 200 acres and then 400 acres. This fire grew to over 61,000 acres. People are asking why they weren't stopping the small fires. Why? Because these days the firefighters “do

not put out fires! They manage fires!” This is a direct quote told over and over again when people ask why the fires are not being put out. Our federal government is paying firefighters to manage fires.

Just imagine the difference in the air quality from a fire of 200 acres that burns for two days and a fire of 61,000 acres that burns for three months!!!

The loggers and ranchers used to help stop fires. They had done this for generations.

Our Great grandparents did this, grandparents did this and taught all of their sons/daughters and grandsons how to stop fires because they didn't want their land burned up or the forests burned up.

When my friend was working as a logger and had a logging company, this is another story about a fire that happened near his home. A fire started one day after some lightning from a thunderstorm. It was in a subdivision where there are many homes. As soon as he heard about it, he took his bulldozer and his crew and machines down to the fire. He started dozing down the fire, pushing dirt because dirt

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will put out a fire... smother it... and dozing down the trees that were on fire and making a fire break.

A fire official in a big car with blue flashing lights came up and told him to stop immediately. The official said my friend had no authority to be doing this. And they told him if he continued to do this, he would be fined \$3 million. The official told him it is not in their policy to let unauthorized personnel work on fires.

He told the official, it is not in his policy to let houses burn up and people burn up and he continued to doze down the fire until it was totally put out with no help from any government people.

Also, crews used to go out and clean the forest up so you wouldn't have such huge fires as you do now. They would allow people to cut dead trees and clear burnt trees and brush.

But the government stopped doing this also.

So basically we are back to the problem of our government, by doing this, is actually making things worse.

Of course, there are areas in some states like California. They have been under a drought now, so much of the ground is dried up and a little bit of lightning can spark a huge fire.

But if the government was in the business of putting out fires instead of managing them, homes and lives might be saved, and climate change from the air pollutants from fires would be a whole lot better.



Wildfire billowing farther up the mountain from where Iona's friend lives. Photo by Sheriff's Department August 27, 2024

**True wealth is not measured in money or status or power.
It is measured in the legacy we leave behind
for those we love and those we inspire.**

Cesar Chavez

Smoke Alarms Daily Report: Part Two

By Iona's other friend in Idaho

10/11 It is still smoky outside. I am still coughing, but it looks like the sky is starting to break up so I told him maybe in an hour we could go swimming.

10/12 I think we are just hanging around the cabin today, smoky again and hopefully the smoke will lift so we can go to the pool later on.

10/13 The smoke was very bad again today. It's really quite depressing.

10/14 The smoke is really bad again and has gotten worse since this morning!!! In the unhealthy air quality index. I'm staying inside today. I'm hoping tomorrow when I go to the valley and to the dentist that the air quality down there will be much better!!! Right now there isn't any smoke down there; it's just here! Tomorrow seems to be our last warm day because Wednesday a storm comes in and our temperature will cool down to the 50s for the next two weeks; that's the daytime 50s. But maybe the smoke will go away then. I sure hope so!!!

And speaking of smoke, yes we have never had weather like this here ever. And there's no real reason for the smoke. Nobody can figure it out because

the fires are getting more contained day by day. There's been no new fires so we do not know why we have this, it is absolutely horrible. We're supposed to have rain for two days and hopefully the smoke will go away!

10/15 I came home to horrible smoke that I can smell strongly!!!! My air quality gauge says 255....very unhealthy! At 300 it becomes hazardous!

As I came up the river road, it was kind of clear and then when it got to the open area, I could see all the smoke coming from the south as I drove home. I thought it might get better as I drove north down the road towards the turn off to our subdivision, but instead it got worse and worse and worse. So, what I see is that we are getting smoke from three fires. One from the south, one from the east, and one from the north. I also noticed more houses for sale. Lots of people have put their houses up for sale. They just do not want to live in this area with this kind of smoke (a lot of people retire here so they are older and this smoke is worse for them.... (and US)) and people are saying this is what it's going to be like every year because of climate change.

I am not so sure I believe that because (of course I believe in climate change, but we haven't had that hot of a summer here this year, it's been fairly normal and we had so much rain which made a lot of brush and undergrowth. So these fires aren't caused by climate change this year).

I really think a lot has to do with the way they fight fires these days as we know, but also the fire from the south was man-caused, not lightning-caused. And people seem to be stupider every year!!! Having campfires in the summer and not putting them out properly. Usually, that's how our fires are started.

10/16 Heavy smoke today. Can't believe the smoke!!! I can smell and taste it today!!!!

10/17 It rained a lot last night. It was a nice steady rain. And when I got up this morning before six, it was raining again. I can see the mountain!!!! HOORAY!!!! It does have some fog and clouds up there but I think the smoke is gone. It's not supposed to be sunny today but mostly cloudy and rainy. Maybe I can go outside and breathe. So I know the smoke has affected my lungs. I'm still coughing every morning!



By Iona

I love Lebanon (now Brendan T. Byrne) State Forest and decided to spend a few hours there on Wednesday, October 16th. When I got home, I was shocked to see that there had been a wildfire there, but I never saw any signs of it. Photo Courtesy CBS News Philadelphia.



Kukama women leaders in Peru. Photo: Sumando Voces, source: Infobae, May 2024

A River's Rights: Indigenous Kukama Women Lead the Way with Landmark Legal Victory

Defending the rights of nature represents a big step forward in the fight against climate change.

By Juana Vera Delgado
Common Dreams: June 17, 2024

Here's one of the most powerful pieces of good news you probably missed this year: a group of Indigenous women in Peru succeeded in asserting the legal right to integrity and protection of the Marañón River, a sacred waterway that flows from the Andes to the Amazon. This is a significant victory for the preservation of nature, water, forests, and biodiversity; in other words, life itself. It's also a big step forward in the fight against climate change, and for the rights of nature, both topics that were debated last week at the 11th Pan Amazonian Social Forum in Rurrenabaque, Bolivia.

The women warriors behind this legal victory – the second of its kind in Latin America after the case of the Atrato River in Colombia – come from the Huaynakana Kamatahuara Kana, a Kukama women's federation in the lower Marañón Watershed.

108 Oil Spills in 40 Years

The Federation began its fight in 2021, when Kukama women from 29 communities, led by Mari Luz Canaquiri, filed an injunction action against Petroperú (a Peruvian state-owned petroleum enterprise), the Ministry of Environment, and other government bodies.

The women were outraged at how the ecosystems of their rivers, forests, and sacred plants were being poisoned and systematically destroyed by more than 40 years of oil spills. In fact, according to an article published by the Citizens' Movement against Climate Change (MOCICC, in Spanish), at least 108 oil spills have occurred along the path of the North Peruvian Oil Pipeline (ONP) since its inception in 1977, with little to no response or outrage from the national and international opinion. These spills are **ecocidal**, and yet, the Peruvian state has enjoyed near total impunity from any consequences so far.

The most outrageous aspect of this fact is that ONP did not respect the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) stipulated in ILO Convention 169, nor has it implemented environmental safeguards, measures, and proper maintenance of the pipeline

Only in 2014, as a consequence of a big rupture of one of the pipelines, did the Kukama become aware of the imminent danger of the oil spill flooding their forest ecosystems and water bodies.

Since then, they, especially the inhabitants of the community of Cuninico, have been forced to consume this contaminated water, with serious consequences for women's reproductive health (with a rise in the number of miscarriages), and generalized immune, respiratory, and gastrointestinal diseases. Even now, owing to the permanent contamination of the Marañón, fish and other riverine species essential to the livelihoods of local communities are disappearing.

Meanwhile, the Peruvian State has not bothered to provide even basic amenities like drinking water or health care to these communities. The health problems amongst the Indigenous Peoples continue to remain unaddressed, while the staggering profits from the sale of crude oil are amassed by a few foreign companies. This includes Pluspetrol, with Argentine capital, in lot 8; the French Perenco, in lots 67 and 39; and Frontera Energy in lot 192 (ex1Ab); and PetroTal in lot 95

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AMAZONAS:

**NACIÓN WAMPÍS SE MOVILIZÓ EN DEFENSA
DE SU TERRITORIO Y EN RECHAZO A LA
MINERÍA Y TALA ILEGAL**

On April 22, 2024, the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation mobilized for the first time in rejection of illegal mining and logging that are invading their territories, Photo: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02ZKNgvGmC9he2ZsQqGdXjMoxZyGcb6zNiSQj6TDfxTH3bAeQTmNESzcx6LbB7Hgvnl&id=100064863841462&_rdc=2&_rdr

from Canadian capital.

After years of struggle, the Kukama women leaders succeeded in getting Judge Corely Armas Chapiama, of the Mixed Court of Nauta-Loreto, to rule in favor of their demands in March 2024. It was so evident that more than four decades of oil spills have destroyed the livelihoods of the Amazonian communities living along the tributaries of the Marañón River.

In the words of one of the women leaders, Emilsen Flores, “When there are spills, our forests are contaminated, our plants, the space [territory] we live in is contaminated. The spills threaten to kill our fish, our fauna, our flora (...) Our health is at risk, our education, and everything related to food, because the food is contami-

nated.”

In court, Emilsen was also the voice of her living and sacred river. As the words of leader Mariluz Canaquiri of the Shapajilla Native Community make clear, “In our culture, the Marañón River is a living being. The Kukama have a close relationship with the rivers, the Purahua lives there, the largest boa in the Amazon, which for us is the mother of the rivers. For the Kukama people, the river is the heart of life, which pumps blood to the whole body.”

The ‘Voice’ of the River

Since the establishment of the colony in Peru until almost the 1970s, public spaces, such as courts, have

privileged and listened primarily to the voices of men, generally white, with formal education. Women’s voices were considered ‘gossip,’ as they were seen as incapable of testifying rationally and coherently. Women were even barred from entering the realm of legal proceedings and litigation. If they were called to testify as witnesses, the testimony of three women together was considered equal to the testimony of a man.

This makes the facts of the ruling of the Mixed Court of Nauta on November 12, 2023 nearly transcendent; a female judge of Indigenous descent, listening attentively not only to the testimony of the Kukama leaders, but also – through the leaders – to the

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‘voice’ of a vital and animate entity, the Marañón River, and its tributaries.

Judge C. Armas Chapiama understood that not only are the rights to a healthy and fair livelihood of local communities being violated by the oil companies, but also the *inherent right to life* of the Marañón River. These rights include its right to flow freely and without contamination to ensure healthy ecosystems of forests, water sources, and biodiversity; the right to feed and be fed by its tributaries; the right to be protected, conserved, and restored; and the right to the regeneration of its natural cycles.

No Reparations or Compensation

Although Judge Armas Chicama ordered ONP’s authorities to update their environmental management instruments and to respect FPIC, she did not issue a ruling to provide reparations to the 69 communities in total who have been affected by the oil spills for more than 40 years. Despite this, it is expected that the ONP authorities will comply with the court’s ruling, since, in Amazonian countries, similar rulings and their subsequent implementations have followed not only the letter of the law, but also its spirit.

The victory of the Kukama sisters is of enormous significance for the country, since it provides monumental inspiration for the struggles of the Amazonian peoples against the many extractive activities that are destroying their territories.

For instance, on April 22, 2024, the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation mobilized for the first time in rejection of illegal

mining and logging that are invading their territories, activities that are endorsed by the current Peruvian government. In this context, the modification of Indigenous Peoples’ forest territories has become a daily practice, with differentiated impacts on the local population, especially women in all their diversities, and youth.

It is also important to note that years of abuse and violations of the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon by the oil industry, including murders of Indigenous leaders, have gone unpunished to date.

As if this is not enough, in January 2024, the Peruvian government approved Law 31973, a modification of Forestry Law No. 29763 – the new law is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, opening the door to intensive cattle ranching, monoculture plantations of oil palm and genetically modified soybeans, among others; which is promoted by large companies and conservative religious organizations such as the Mennonites.

The Struggle for Justice Continues

Amazonian peoples’ organizations and environmental and human rights defenders have held massive national mobilizations against Law 31973. Under the slogan “*La selva no se vende, se defiende.*” (“The jungle is not for sale,” a famous slogan that emerged in one of the first Indigenous struggles against oil in 2009, known as *Baguazo*). Peruvians are continuing to fight for the repeal of this harmful law which threatens the ecosystems of the Amazon. However, the congress-

men who promoted Law 31973 are not only turning a deaf ear to the people’s demands, but are also trumpeting the benefits of the new law – supposedly – for small and medium illegal agricultural activities.

While the murders of Indigenous leaders and Amazon defenders remain unpunished and invisible, entire ecosystems of our forests are cut down and destroyed, water sources are polluted, and biodiversity is being preyed upon, the UN’s Green Climate Fund is shelling out nearly U.S. \$200 million for monocultures of oil palm, cocoa, and rubber, and unsustainable industrial cattle ranching in places like the Amazon. Agribusiness giants like the food processing company Marfrig of Brazil, which has been linked to illegal logging, “cattle laundering,” and extensive deforestation for monoculture oil palm plantations, are the primary beneficiaries of these policies.

Legal victories like the Kukama women’s successful fight to defend the Marañón River are rare. This is because transnational corporations are empowered and protected by legislation like Peru’s “Anti-Forestry” Law 31973. In fact, powerful groups that wield influence in Peru’s current government are already trying to have the historic ruling overturned, arguing that an anthropocentric vision is a fundamental principle of the Peruvian Constitution, and that the rights of nature hold no value.

In light of these monumental challenges, the world’s ecofeminist, environmental, and climate justice movements must unite so that grassroots struggles like that of our Kukama sisters endure and do not fade away.

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

Rights of Nature Movement Growing Worldwide

Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF)

What ARE the Rights of Nature?

Environmental degradation is advancing around the world. The United Nations has warned that we are heading toward “major planetary catastrophe.” For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature.

Making this fundamental shift means acknowledging our dependence on nature and respecting our need to live in harmony with the natural world. It means securing the highest legal protection and the highest societal value for nature through the recognition of nature’s rights and associated human rights.

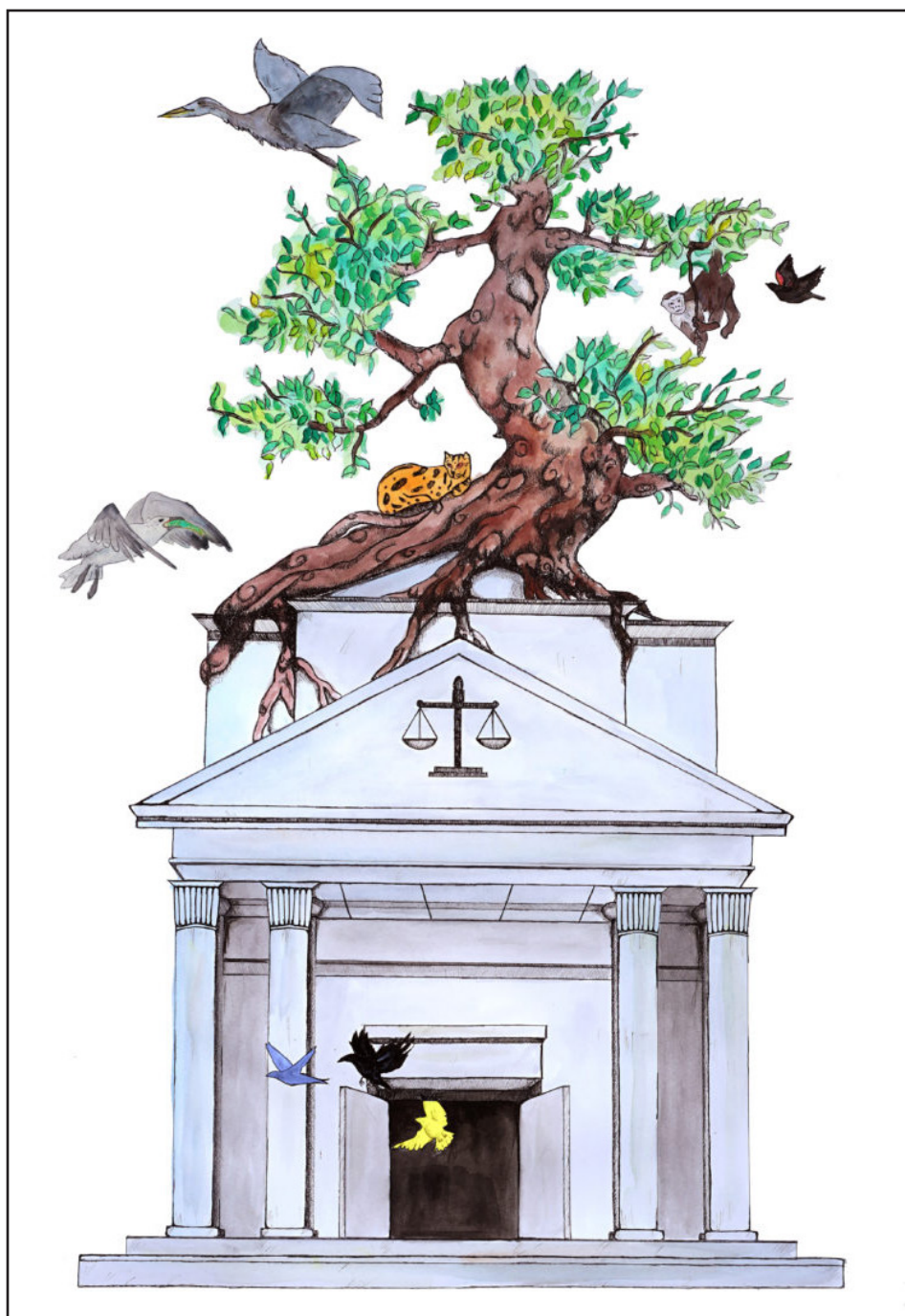
The global Rights of Nature movement is gaining momentum. Read our Timeline at <https://celdf.org/rights-of-nature/timeline/>.

The Human Right to a Healthy Environment

Many nations have expanded their body of legal rights to recognize a human right to a healthy environment, including Spain, France, Portugal, Greece, and Finland. However, global warming is accelerating, and ecosystems are pushed to collapse.

Does Rights of Nature Mean ‘Personhood’?

One common misconception – including within elements of the Rights of Nature movement – is that organizers are advancing legal personhood for ecosystems. The truth is more complex. Read this conversation with *The Guardian* at <https://celdf.org/2019/12/guest-blog-a-conversation-with-the-guardian/>.



Rights of Nature Going Statewide

As the number of communities advancing Community Rights – including the Rights of Nature – grows, CELDF is assisting them in joining to form statewide Community Rights Networks. We are also partnering with these Networks to draft constitutional amendments to establish provisions for communities and Nature. Today,

Colorado, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Ohio are advancing such constitutional amendments.

In 2019, Toledo, Ohio adopted the Lake Erie Bill of Rights – the first Rights of Nature law for a specific ecosystem. In March of 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) revoked a permit for a frack waste injection well in Grant Township. DEP officials cited

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Grant Township's Home Rule Charter banning injection wells as grounds for their reversal.

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge

Aboriginal nations and communities retain sovereignty and knowledge over the natural ecosystems they have evolved with. To recognize and follow the natural laws of nature necessitates the elevation particularly of the Traditional Knowledge of local indigenous communities.

Rights of Nature Taking First International Steps

Following the first communities in the United States enacting Nature rights laws over a decade ago, the initiative became a growing global movement.

In 2008, CELDF was invited to meet with the Ecuador Constituent Assembly as they drafted a new constitution. We assisted the Assembly with constitutional provisions regarding Nature's defense. Ecuadorians adopted their new constitution by an overwhelming majority, making Ecuador the first country in the world to recognize the Rights of Nature in its constitution.

Ecuador's Rights of Nature constitutional provisions – found in Chapter 7 – state: "Nature, or Pachamama, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions, and evolutionary processes. All persons, communities, peoples, and nations can call upon public authorities to enforce the Rights of Nature." Available Now: English Translation & Webinar of the 2022 Landmark Decision in Ecuador to Protect Los Cedros Forest over Mining Profits at <https://celdf.org/2022/07/available-now-english-translation-webinar-of-the-landmark-decision-in-ecuador-to-protect-los-cedros-forest-over-mining-profits/>

Watershed International Cases

The first cases have now been brought and litigated in Ecuador, where the courts upheld and affirmed the constitutional rights of ecosystems.

They include a lawsuit brought by Richard Frederick Wheeler and Eleanor Geer Huddle in the name of the Vilcabamba River. The river was a plaintiff in the case, seeking to enforce its own constitutional rights to exist and thrive. The healthy functioning and flow of the river was being impacted by a government road-widening construction project.

In 2011, the Provincial Justice Court of Loja ruled in favor of the Vilcabamba River. This marked the first time since that a court upheld Nature's constitutional right to protection.

Source: <https://celdf.org/rights-of-nature/>

Nature is Above Human Courts and Systems of Law

Even though we are taught to believe that our laws and courts have the final say, we at CELDF have learned over the 25-plus years of working on advancing Rights of Nature laws that in the end, Nature will prevail.

Explanation of the artwork.

The "scales of justice" on the courtroom face are shown in balance, contrasting with the very unbalanced place in which it is currently stuck. The courtroom is depicted as gray, colorless and lifeless, but the colorful birds flying out of the courtroom doors and the vivid colors of nature atop the courthouse depict how life-giving change can happen if we continue to challenge and fight for Nature's rights, which in the end are also our rights – as we are part of Nature.

We at CELDF are honored and inspired by Blake and Tzintzun's talent and work advancing Rights of Nature in their own community along the St. Lawrence River. And since the St. Lawrence is the gateway to the Atlantic Ocean from the Great Lakes,

they are also following closely the Great Lakes Bill of Rights legislation introduced in the New York General Assembly this year.

Blake Lavia and Tzintzun Aguilar-Izzo together make up Talking Wings. Blake is a filmmaker, illustrator and author and Tzintzun is an environmental artist-scholar and story weaver, striving to plant the seeds of a regenerative future. This amazingly creative team was able to take CELDF's verbal description of our Rights of Nature work and transform it into creative illustrations and logos to convey our message visually. Art has always played an important role in movements for systemic change.

It is our hope that their amazing artwork inspires you to continue to protect your community and the amazing ecosystems that you are interconnected with, and to remind you that CELDF is here to assist and support you moving forward.

Please consider donating to keep this work moving forward.

Every contribution helps us champion the Rights of Nature. Make a Recurring or One-Time Donation at <https://celdf.org/donate/>

About CELDF's Center for the Rights of Nature

CELDf is assisting civil society, indigenous peoples, communities, and governments to advance laws and policies for the protection of Nature and the environment. This includes providing legislative and policy drafting, legal research, public engagement and education, ongoing support during global crises, and trainings.

Communities in the United States and the country of Ecuador have also worked with CELDF to establish the first global laws protecting Nature. Today, we are working in India, Nepal, Australia, Cameroon, Colombia, the United States, and other countries to establish similar laws.



Hannah Conner and her daughter Emmylou working in the field together. Photo by Hannah's husband Joe Soto

Farm News

By Hannah Conner
Ramblin' Sol Farm, New Jersey USA

Shoulders are a big deal. Set in between and responsible for carrying all of our burdens...

We consider this point in the season a shoulder because we are in between summer and fall crops and so much is happening behind the scenes. These periods are so important because perfectly timing successions of plantings to ensure a non-stop variety of foods is one of our biggest challenges each year. Slight shifts in climate can have huge impacts on when the next round of plants mature. Therefore, what we did the year before might not work the

following year.

Our weekly field walks are key to our ability to make quick decisions to respond to the environment, but it is far from a perfect system. During this transition, we are spending much of our time preparing the soil and planting all our salad greens, carrots, turnips, radishes, kohlrabi, and bok choy. We are also paying close attention to the water and weed control in fall favorites like ginger, turmeric, and sweet potatoes.

Farmers' shoulders are also aching this time of year. Growers who work closely with the land and their community shoulder many burdens. With limited resources, we are trying to address environmental and social concerns through growing good food.

In addition to understanding plants, soil, insects, biology, chemistry... we also need to be excellent educators, business owners, employers, and neighbors, and try to meet our own basic needs. It is easy to feel like we aren't doing any of it well...

So when the team of entomologists who have been studying predatory insects here for two years told us that we were the only farm they are working with that had naturally occurring predator wasps for squash bugs... the shoulder weighed down by worries that after everything our practices might not actually be making a difference... felt a little lighter.

Here is to getting through another shoulder season and enjoying the glorious autumn ahead!

OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Sustainable Farming Project: Vision to Eradicate and Empower Rural Communities to Escape Extreme Poverty

By Ray Juma, Homa Bay, Kenya

hashtag#permaculture hashtag#community

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ray-juma-b4442920b/?originalSubdomain=ke>



OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Energy Crisis in Zambia

We are working on the solar electric stove using power from 2 or 4x100W /12V solar panels. And we did presentations and demonstrations at different government institutions.

The innovation is effective and

efficient – especially in this energy crisis period. I attach this email with a letter from the ministry of Energy and a picture about the innovation.

We are working on alternatives to charcoal and clean cooking solutions in Zambia. The low-power cooking technology can be a good choice for the population in energy crisis like

here in Zambia.

We are looking for your help and support to organize solar cooking demonstrations and presentations in the communities.

Thanks and best regards,
Clement Musonda, Zambia
musondakankomba@gmail.com



OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION



Just how much of nature can we set aside, to let nature do its thing; save itself, and therefore save ourselves? Photo: Jason Hogan on Unsplash

What if We Admitted Nature is in Charge?

Giving Back Half to Nature

By Matt Orsagh, Substack
September 16, 2024

Anyone looking at the planetary boundaries framework will see 6 of those 9 boundaries already crossed, with ocean acidification on the way.

How do we stop destroying ourselves – and what would that look like?

I've talked about what policies could help, what leaders need to do, and what each of us can do to get that done, but let's step back and take a broader look at the problem this time.

Let's look at nature itself from a broad level and remove ourselves from the equation as much as possible.

Just how much of nature can we set aside, to let nature do its thing; save itself, and therefore save ourselves?

Many environmentalists set a target of protecting 30% of land and marine territory by 2030. That was the idea behind the 2022 Kunming Montreal Biodiversity framework which adopted several ambitious environmental goals. Below is the 30% language from the framework itself.

Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 percent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity, and connectivity.

Conserve 30% of Land, Waters, and Seas

Ensure and enable that by 2030

at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically-representative, well-connected, and equitably-governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing Indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes, and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

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OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

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Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 percent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity, and connectivity.

Those are pretty nice goals. But how close are we to those 30 percent goals?

So how are we doing?

Not great.

As of 2021, about 17% of land and 8% of the oceans were protected. The silver lining in those low numbers is that about 42% of that protection happened between 2011 and 2021.

Organizations like Nature Needs Half advocate setting aside half of terrestrial land for nature to adequately combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

In 2017, E.O. Wilson wrote a book called *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. Wilson argued that if we protect half the Earth's land and sea and manage sufficient habitat to safeguard the bulk of biodiversity, we could go a long way toward getting where we need to be on our environmental goals. Wilson's idea was to create a "moon shot" goal that would inspire humanity to act.

As an example, Wilson cites studies that show that if we could set aside the entire blue water outside the Exclusive Economic Zones of the coastal nations, and prohibit fishing throughout the open sea, we would *increase*, not decrease, the global growth of fisheries.

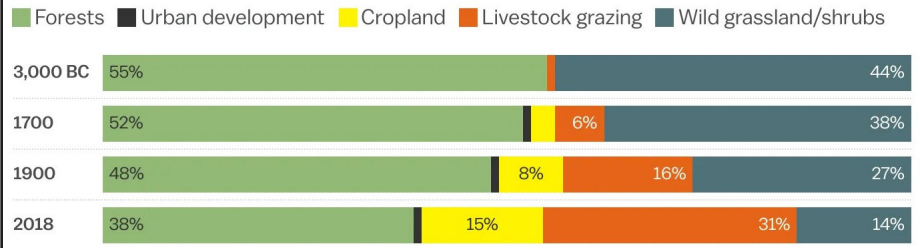
Just leaving the majority of the ocean alone would benefit humanity greatly.

But can we do that, or anything remotely close to it?

Do we have the wisdom to retreat?

We need somewhere to live, places to play, places to grow our food, and places to work. But we surely don't need to exercise dominion over all the places we feel we have conquered.

The demand for more meat is the leading cause of deforestation



According to *Our World in Data*, the figures account for 71 percent of Earth's land surface – the other 29 percent is desert, glaciers, rocky terrain, and other barren land. Chart: Kenny Torrella/Vox. Source: Our World in Data/Williams/HYDE/FAO

Currently, about 41% of the land in the lower 48 states in America is used for raising or feeding cattle. Those percentages are similar in other developed countries.

Beef tastes great, and many of us eat plenty of dairy – but if what we eat and drink is making our lives untenable, maybe we should make a bit of a change. The above graphic from Vox shows how our demand for beef and dairy has led to deforestation, which is a main driver of climate change and biodiversity loss, and pushes us to the negative side of land-use and water-use planetary boundaries as well.

What if we treated Nature with the reverence it deserves?

The answer is a strategic retreat from Nature. Land use for cattle is just one example. There are others. We need to manage our land and water better. Often this "better management" is to not manage it at all.

The world's tallest living tree, a 600- to 800-year-old Redwood named Hyperion, is now off-limits to visitors. People who attempt to see the tree could face fines of \$5,000 or up to six months in jail for damaging the fragile ecosystem around the tree.

The National Parks Service rule is an effort to preserve the ecosystem around Hyperion to protect it from destruction.

This rule could be a model for leaving a nation alone, and letting it regenerate.

If we get out of the way, and in many cases, just remove ourselves from the equation, nature heals, regenerates, and provides us with the ecosystem services we have taken for granted. A strategic retreat from nature will give us cleaner air, water, and land.

You can't have a footprint in a place where you don't set your foot.

Half-the-earth is an aspirational goal we should aspire to. E.O. Wilson's "moon shot" is still one we should aim for.

It's time we admit that Nature is a better steward of Nature than we are.

Since the Industrial Revolution, we have lied to ourselves, claiming we have dominion over nature. We do not. Nature has dominion over us. Humbly stepping back and bowing to Nature's majesty, giving her back the reins is just the first step we should take.

But we have not taken it yet. We need to work on that.

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Source: <https://degrowthisthe-answer.substack.com/p/what-if-we-admitted-nature-is-in>

OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Networking with Friends

Note from Iona: *When I was excitedly planning to start the Climate Café, I posted my ideas on the Deep Transformation Network website and Larry Berger responded. He's way ahead of me so I was happy to see his thoughts about organizing people to work together. Now I have the pleasure of sharing his wisdom with you.*

Thanks so much, Iona! That is a very valuable guide to setting up a local cafe. Serge will also be a most valuable source because he has led groups for many years.

I already sent you a text on DTN (Deep Transformation Network) which has some of what I say here. I have been working with virtual groups like the one on DTN we just had. One is called Cultivating Community, which meets biweekly on Fridays at 10am, led by Peter Pula.

This has been going on for over four years, and they are just now thinking about building in climate issues. But

the benefit of joining us is that you will see how to structure these meetings. For instance, you don't want people monopolizing the spotlight, which can often happen. You want to give everyone an amount of time to speak, where everyone else just listens and does not interrupt. And crosstalk in general can be counterproductive, these things can sometimes get argumentative, which you don't want.

You also may want to have breakout groups of say three people, especially given the size of your group, so everyone has a chance to feel involved. In larger groups people can feel left out if you don't do that.

I also am just starting a group called Facing the Climate Crisis Together, which meets every four weeks on Monday at 1pm.

In both of these groups we ask questions which help people sort out the direction they want to take. In my group we focus on aspects of the crisis that people choose as themes for each

session.

Here is an example, where about a third of the meeting is spent addressing each question, both in the group as a whole and in breakout groups:

1. Does any aspect stand out for you as most important?
2. Ideally, how should we respond to it?
3. What steps, if any, are you taking or prepared to take now?

There are many possible aspects, such as the effects on individual communities, climate denialism, environmental degradation, fossil fuel misinformation, climate injustice, what we owe to the young and future generations, climate refugees, etc. So, people can focus on specific projects for the town, or they can address the larger issues that face the nation and the world.

I hope this helps, and I would love to hear more from you!

Best,

Larry Berger, New Jersey USA
berger2300@gmail.com

Green Party USA

Our 10 Key Values

Grassroots Democracy
Social Justice & Equal Opportunity
Ecological Wisdom
Non-Violence
Decentralization
Community-Based Economics
Feminism & Gender Equity
Respect For Diversity
Personal & Global Responsibility
Future Focus & Sustainability

OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Courage: It ain't that hard to find.

By Matt Orsagh

Degrowth is the Answer: Substack

October 31, 2024

Photo: Dylan Hunter, Unsplash

In the past week, the billionaire owners of both the *LA Times* and the *Washington Post* scotched endorsements of Kamala Harris for president by each paper's respective editorial boards.

Both billionaire gentlemen can say whatever they want about “not telling their readers what to think” or “returning to our roots and not endorsing candidates,” but everyone knows what happened.

When each editorial board has a history of endorsing candidates, and each newspaper owner has other “real billionaire” businesses that could be harmed by a candidate who is cool with using the state for political retribution, the math isn't hard.

You know you live in the darkest timeline when news organizations are quick to reframe cowardice as a shrewd business decision.

Most of those media organizations are owned by other billionaires who want to stay on Trump's good side as if there is such a thing.

Hurray for cowardice! It is always there to reveal one's true character when hard decisions need to be made.

If courage is not valued, what is it that we have here?

Courage is knowing the job will be painful and dangerous, but doing it anyway because it needs to be done. Maybe less than a week before the presidential elections in the United States is a bad time to write about courage, or maybe it is the best time.

Just maybe stay away from your television set, or your newsfeed if you



are looking for it. You aren't going to find it there.

The book, *Profiles in Courage* was written in 1956 by John F. Kennedy with Ted Sorensen as a ghostwriter. The book profiles eight United States senators who defied their party and constituents to do what they felt was the right thing.

I can't think of eight U.S. senators in the last two decades whose story would deserve to be included in a collection. I might be hard to pressed to find eight in my lifetime. A book titled *Profiles in Cowardice* would likely have hundreds of stories to tell. Many of these I already know. Many of these you already know. (I looked it up. There already is such a book. It is about what you think it is about).

The story is similar in other nations. Our leaders have not wrapped themselves in glory recently.

I don't pity them, but I understand the phenomenon. In a world in which forever economic growth is the religion of the nation, our leaders are

going to fall over themselves to prove that they are best for growth. That ethic puts profits above people and the planet in almost every situation.

I know not all acts of cowardice have money at their core. But the actions of Patick Soon-Shiong and Jeff Bezos certainly were. Our leaders in Congress and the business community are made of no different stock.

Don't expect courage from your leaders. There is no money in it.

Our current historical moment does not seem to value courage in the classical sense. Our society is chasing growth, clicks, and money, and as long as the relatively good times roll, that will likely continue. When courage is called for, and someone demurs, they will continue to be spun as shrewd businessmen or businesswomen.

But we will not be in that historical moment much longer. Just yesterday, the areas of Eastern Spain got a year's worth of rain in one day. At this time, there have been 95 reported deaths.

Continued on next page

OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Continuation from previous page

This follows hurricanes Helene and Milton in the U.S. just a month ago that killed hundreds and caused over \$100 billion in damage.

As I write this, the largest humanitarian crisis the world has ever seen is playing out in ... Sudan. You thought I was going to say somewhere else, but so much death and destruction is happening that Sudan has largely slipped through the news cracks. Gaza, and Ukraine of course make that list too. Yes, there are always wars, famine, and disasters, but because of the lack of courage of our leaders for the past 50 years, those crises are lining up at a much more frequent rate.

Not all of these events have been caused by environmental collapse, but most of them have, and more of them will be with each passing year. The people who hide behind their wallets, and only are interested in clicks will lose influence over time. People with courage will be needed, and with any luck, they will become the leaders we need.

Be the courage you want to see.

An interesting thing happened to me years ago that I have never told anyone about. It's not a very exciting or titillating story, but one that I enjoyed at the time, and I've thought about it now and again since then.

I was sitting in a café in the St. Pancras train station in London. I was there on business and was catching a train to Brussels to speak at or attend some conference, I don't remember those details.

I had about an hour until my train came and I was eating a quick dinner of a sandwich and a Diet Coke (I'm an American. I don't do tea) before my early evening train.

A young man, about 10 years my junior walked up to me (I was sitting down), made eye contact with me, and said, "Can I talk to you?"

I said, "Yes," and he did.



I don't remember his exact words, but he told me that he had done this on occasion, walked up to people he didn't know, and asked them the same question.

I was intrigued, so I said, "Sure, what is your question?"

He asked. **"What is one piece of advice you can give me?"**

It was a great question. I wasn't expecting it, and I wanted to give him a good answer, so I stayed quiet and thought about it for a good while.

I thought back through my life and searched for any advice that anyone had given me that I should pass on. There were such words of wisdom, but I thought I should say something that was my own, so I started over. My temporary companion patiently waited. I didn't feel hurried. I calmly sat and thought and after about a minute it hit me.

I turned to him and said, "There

really is nothing in life worth being afraid of."

He smiled, said thank you, and walked away.

I didn't get his name, and I never saw him again.

I hope he took my advice.

I have a feeling he did.

I hope he is out there changing things, unafraid.

I hope you do so, too.

There really is nothing worth being afraid of.

The worst you can do is fail.

But the rest of us are here to catch you.

If you enjoy Degrowth is the Answer, share it with your friends and earn rewards when they subscribe.

Invite your friends and earn rewards at <https://degrowthistheanswer.substack.com/leaderboard>.

Messages from Our Friends

(after *Earth Speaks* #1
was emailed)

You always do better. I still believe
you can do even more better.

Marium Shere Munezero, Uganda

I'm going to read it and in the
future, I will send important stories
to this email as the ones I was using
didn't work.

Bill Boteler, Maryland USA

Wow! So nice Mom. It is true that
the Earth has no political party and
will never have political affiliation.

We should do as much good as we
can to protect the Earth. I person-
ally will share with my social media
friends and other environmental lov-
ers.

NO ONE WILL BE SAFE WHEN
THE EARTH WILL BE FULLY DE-
TERIORATED.

Sengo Kesheni, Tanzania

Thanks a million for resuming work
on the cause. I look forward to reading
most of the articles. Fantastic photos
as well!

CK

Let us pray for you God.

Michael Hopkinz, Uganda

Good job Iona!

Jay Sweeney, USA

Happy to hear about you once again!

We are pushing our solar cooking
project in Zambia. And finally, we
have the commercial designs.

These are the pictures for last week
at the agriculture commercial show-
ground (page 22). And the solar cook-
ing group at Eastern Province/Chipata.

Thanks and best wishes,

Clement Musonda, Zambia
+260974579031

Dear Iona,

Cordial greetings from SCOPE
Kenya.

I hope that you are well and growing
stronger. I am very ok, and progress-
ing on well with our work with young
people, in transforming bare/degraded
landscapes into productive food for-
ests, to alleviate human suffering as
we restore and conserve biodiversity.

The purpose of writing to you is to,
first check on you, and secondly share
a short video documentary of our
work.

Please open the link to watch it at
<https://youtu.be/fiwLkHbGP78?si=avvSqyXyfTMEjBNY>. Hoping that you
will find it informative and useful.

Promoting Practical Agroecology
Education in Schools to reconnect
children with Nature, healthy lifestyle,
& environmental stewardship.

Warm wishes, long life full of love
and happiness.

With Kind Regards,

John Macharia, National Coordinator
SCOPE KENYA

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scope-kenya-3a86651b3](https://ke.linkedin.com/in/scope-kenya-3a86651b3)

Iona's reply:

Dear John,

I want the whole world to watch
your video! If only everyone knew
what you know and did what you're
doing, we would have no more prob-
lems. Thank you from my heart. I
even had tears by the end of your film
because it is so beautiful. I love these
children, and I love all the adults who
are working with you and them.

First, I'm going to forward this
to my local organic farmer friends,

Hannah and Joey, whom you see in
Earth Speaks. They are at the Farmers'
Market now; I have published their
stories before.

Secondly, I will publish your lovely
email next time and encourage our
readers to take 11 minutes and 33
seconds out of their day to watch this
and be inspired.

You are a hero in my eyes.

Thank you also for your beautiful
words in closing.

Love, Iona

Congratulations on your new ven-
ture!

Dylan Weiss, USA

Good on you Iona!

Glad to read of your ongoing com-
mitment in your first *Earth Speaks*.

Love,

Robert Burrowes, Australia

Hi Iona,

So nice to hear from you, and I see
you've been busy. "Well done" on all
this too! You're really doing some-
thing in a constructive and educational
way. I wish you the best of luck with
all this, and even though I don't par-
ticipate, please continue to send me
your newspapers.

All the best,

Barb B., New Jersey USA

Glad you are concentrating on trees
and local issues, but there are excellent
statewide groups such as Food and
Water Watch that are already doing
what you suggest and much more.
They are very experienced and dedi-
cated people.

We already have political connec-
tions and support. We have made lots
of progress in stopping fossil fuel proj-
ects in New Jersey. If you don't know
about them, you should.

Continued on next page

Continuation from previous page

Excellent resource and active group. I have been in and out of hospital being treated for leukemia-related issues, so unable to do what I was doing.

Carol G., New Jersey USA [Carole was a dynamic environmental activist here in Brick. Sadly, leukemia took her life. Brick lost a wonderful activist. I will miss her.]

Dear Iona,

It is wonderful to hear from you. I have the same email address but didn't receive the email.

Thank you for all you do.

Regards,

Raj Phukan, India

Thank you, Iona. You just can't stop trying to save this poor Earth human beings continue destroying. Bless you for that.

Regenerative farming and composting are the answers. Unfortunately, overpopulation will be our demise. As the Pope said we can't keep multiplying like rabbits.

In a small way I'm attempting to do my best and praying we wake up before it's too late.

Just keep doing what you do, your mom would be proud.

Regards,

Steve C., Maryland USA

Hello Dearest Iona.

Thank you for this Climate Book, I hope it will make impact from safe planet friends and from your readers and partners.

Best regards,

Leon Simwerayi, DR Congo

Greetings from Zimbabwe. Good news for the new publication.

Biggie Musemwa, Zimbabwe

Hi Iona,

I am truly impressed that you have

started a newspaper again and not surprised that Greta Thunberg's excellent climate book was your inspiration.

You are an indomitable spirit!!

It is amazing that you came up with a Climate Café plan and later found that other climate cafés have sprung up, even a website for them.

By the way, I just finished a book called *Total Garbage*, which is about much more than trash. I recommend it highly and there was a webinar with Pulitzer Prize winning author Edward Humes, open to all.

The full title is: *Total Garbage: How We Can Fix Our Waste and Heal Our World* by Edward Humes.

Lots of love,

Tyla Matteson, Virginia USA

Dear Iona,

I have been meaning to email for ages, but especially this time of year the days and weeks just seem to fly past – as opposed to the long dark winter days that linger. I think the world must revolve faster during our summer months!

How are things with you? I hope you are keeping well and that life is settling down for you after the last few months.

Thank you for sending your excellent newspaper. I am again impressed by how you include a range of articles that are so thought provoking. It is so good to read.

I particularly appreciate your Steps to Creating Climate Cafés. This is a good framework to work with and I will think about how I can integrate it into my own actions. And I am honored for you to include my poem. Much appreciated.

Hope all is good for you and sending lots of love

Violet Helleborine, UK

Thank you for attempting the ambitious goal of more trees in Brick. The

lack of cheerleading simple ideas to help cool the air around us frustrates me at times. "Just shut off the lights, folks," would go a long way to save energy and add money to people's wallets. But we can start small and pray we reach the little ones to protect their future.

I'm going to contact Manasquan Bank today to find out more about their program.

Barbara Kochie, New Jersey USA

As far as the Climate Café account setups, I was so happy (and eager!) to be able to get them started. I was inspired by you and the group and given a new sort of energy that I'm so happy to be able to find in my own hometown – that I've never really felt a full connection to – whether it's because I'm a first generation American of my family or because I only went to private school growing up, I've always felt disconnected to Brick. The group, however, helped me feel much closer to my hometown as I'm so happy to find other town residents whose values resonate with mine.

Lauren Lastimosa, Brick, New Jersey USA

We sent it to about 290 people across Montana.

Frank Kromkowski, Helena, Montana USA

They quote research about old growth forests actually creating more rainfall.

It's interesting to read they release unique microbes and fungal spores that contribute to this.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2024/09/as-logging-intensifies-forest-fires-wetsuweten-fight-to-protect-old-growth/>

Bill Boteler, Maryland USA