



Justice Rising

Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Domination Corporate Destruction of Nature & Grassroots Solutions to Save the Planet

by Jim Tarbell

Why isn't the environmental movement about driving the rights of nature into the Constitution?

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As a result of agricultural pollution there is now a dead zone in the Gulf the size of New Jersey.

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ExxonMobil has supported 29 groups generating fraudulent information about global warming.

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As usual, what to do is being decided by giant corporations.

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A Publication of the Alliance for Democracy

The bull has taken earth by its horn. Wall Street's infamous bull has gored our natural world and its environment for profits. Corporations have reaped billions by taking advantage of marketplace failures to account for environmental costs of corporate activities. Impaled on the charging lance of our money-as-power system, we and world's natural systems are paying the price. Every day the list of costs and calamities grows. Persistent organic pollutants have spread throughout the food chain. Destruction of our soils and other natural systems have led to extensive species decimation. Cataclysmic alterations of the biosphere are spreading cancer and threatening to cook us all.

Our corporate-funded political system has installed a government that ignores the fact that hundreds of years of industrial production and consumption are responsible for creating the problem. As a result, they refuse to comply with global environmental agreements on the excuse that the Third World is not sharing a fair portion of the burden. But the burden should be borne by those that created the problem in the first place.

As the Greenland ice shelf melts, the petroleum corporations see opportunities to extract long hidden oil supplies beneath its surface. This will inevitably add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere and speed up global warming. One wonders if we are not really just a mutant of lemmings headed off the cliff.

On the bright side, awareness is growing, but are the right measures being considered? Pundits for corporate profit, who loathe to see the end of our high-consumption lifestyle, claim we only need to go nuclear or drive a hydrogen car to save the planet.

Too often, these solutions only generate environmental costs elsewhere; often onto the backs of poor and politically disempowered communities. Fortunately, an environmental justice movement is mobilizing those constituencies to fight

back against the unfair distribution of environmental burdens.

Such a realization has led the common people in Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela to exert their political power and demand that their leaders not enter into free trade pacts that just expand corporate-driven and environmentally devastating development. In the end, nothing is free in "free" trade except the environmental and cultural costs that global investors are able to avoid.

In this issue of *Justice Rising*, we look at who is doing the hard work in this country to address these problems. Ruth Caplan points to the Pennsylvania farmers who have begun a drive that could put the rights of nature into our constitution. Lou Hammann recounts the tale of self-reliant Hundredfold Farm, which had to fight entrenched powers to come into being.

We have to join them and stop the charge of the imperial bull. It is our responsibility to insure that we have healthy and environmentally sound trade policies. Models of self reliance and consumption control need to be adopted. Finally, we have to realize that we are part of nature. As it thrives we thrive. All of these stories are in this issue of *Justice Rising*. Enjoy.



Rainforest Action network added a painfully skewered earth to The Wall Street Bull, several blocks from the New York Stock Exchange.
photo:RAN

Speaking Out For the Rights of Nature

by Ruth Caplan

When was the last time you read the US Constitution—read it carefully? Did you take note of how the Constitution protects the rights of persons to own property, even the right to own slaves as property, although the "S" word is never used. Did you remind yourself that the Fifth Amendment requires "just compensation" for any taking of private property for public use and that the Fourteenth Amendment says "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law."

Now search for any language referring to protection of nature. Nothing—*Nada*. This is why Congress resorted to the Commerce Clause of the Constitution—"The Congress shall have the Power ...To regulate Commerce...among the several States...."—as a justification for passing national environmental laws. A bird flies across state lines. A stream feeds a river that eventually crosses state lines.

Air knows no state boundaries. The environment as an article of commerce!

If the abolitionist movement was about driving freedom for slaves into the Constitution; if the women's suffrage movement was about guaranteeing women the vote as part of their Constitutional rights; then why isn't the environmental movement about driving the rights of nature into the Constitution? This is the logic followed by environmental attorney Thomas Linzey with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) when he asserts that there is no environmental movement in this country.

So where is this new approach taking root? In the work of the national environmental organizations? No, it began in the rural town of Tamaqua, located in the anthracite

coal-mining region of eastern Pennsylvania. On September 19, 2006, the Tamaqua Borough Council unanimously passed a law banning corporations from spreading sludge in the borough and recognizing that ecosystems in Tamaqua possess enforceable rights against corporations. Who will enforce these rights? The ordinance "establishes that Tamaqua residents can bring lawsuits to vindicate not only their own civil rights, but also the newly-mandated Rights of Nature."

Just a week later, the Board of Supervisors in nearby Rush Township passed a similar sludge ordinance recognizing the rights of nature. Then in early December the East Brunswick Board of Supervisors passed a similar ordinance. Three towns in three months in rural Schuylkill County took this radical action. The East Brunswick ordinance goes one step further: "In the Ordinance, the Township Board of Supervisors declared that if state and federal agencies—or corporate managers—attempt to invalidate the Ordinance, a Township-wide public meeting would be hosted to determine additional steps to expand local control and self-governance within the Township."

As CELDF historian Richard Grossman notes, "East Brunswick has joined other Pennsylvania municipalities in contesting the constitutional, legal and cultural chains that bind communities to the corporate system. They have heroically nullified corporate privilege delivered from on high by exercising democratic rule of law from below."

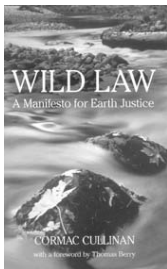
In April, Linzey joined with *Wild Law* author Cormac Cullinan to speak at a conference on "Earth Jurisprudence: Ethics, Ecology, and Law" hosted by the Barry and St. Thomas University Law Schools. In 2006, the law schools had joined to launch the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, whose mission is to "re-envision law and governance in ways that support the well-being of the Earth community as a whole, and to foster mutually enhancing relationships among humans and nature and recognize the rights of nature."

It is time to stop treating nature as property, to stop trying to protect the environment by treating air, water and wildlife as articles of commerce. It is time to build a real environmental movement!

Ruth Caplan is the national coordinator of AfD's Defending Water for Life Campaign. She will help lead a pre-convention Democracy School in Tucson this Fall.



graphic: Kjersten Jeppesen



Wild Law: A Manifesto for Earth Justice

by Cormac Cullinan

reviewed by Alis Valencia

How did we get to the brink of environmental catastrophe? Are we up against forces too strong to overcome? Do we need to adopt different strategies to prevent the continuing destruction of nature? Or might there be more fundamental issues that we need to examine as well?

Wild Law is Cormac Cullinan's response to the last question. The crux of the matter is how we see ourselves in relation to nature. We are the source of such grievous harm to nature because we stand apart from and exploit the natural world. Earth's salvation lies in our return to an existence where we live as an integral part of nature, no more privileged than any other part.

The importance of *Wild Law* lies in Cullinan's views on how to think and behave as a member of the earth community. Because laws guide how members of society are to act, we must reconceive the purpose of our systems of governance to promote behaviors that benefit human society without causing harm to nature. In part, this means accepting the fundamental principle that "each member of the Earth Community should be at liberty to fulfill its role within the Earth Community." Cullinan's touches of pragmatism—for instance, we would need laws that keep us from taking so much water from a river that it cannot sustain its natural flow—not only ground nice sentiments but also point the way forward.

Cheap Food At What Cost?

by Bob St. Peter

In the middle part of the country, where endless rows of corn and soybeans dominate the landscape, a very telling event takes place each Spring. This is the time of year when chemical fertilizers are applied most heavily and the Spring rains carry run-off into the rivers and drinking water. When the nitrate levels, from the nitrogen-based fertilizers, get real high, "blue baby alerts" are issued. Pregnant women are told not to drink tap water and parents are warned against giving it to infants under six months. High concentrations of nitrates in the body interfere with the blood's ability to carry oxygen and in small bodies can lead to the suffocation of the brain, thus the term "blue baby."

Astoundingly, it doesn't stop there. Fertilizer run-off that enters the tributaries of the Mississippi River travels south and gets dumped into the Gulf of Mexico, now industrial agriculture's sewer system. The fertilizers give algae a big boost in growth, causing large algae blooms. When the unnaturally high amount of algae die off and begin to decompose they absorb oxygen from the water, suffocating fish, shellfish, and plants. As a result of agricultural pollution there is now a dead zone in the Gulf the size of New Jersey, where aquatic life cannot survive.

The rise in the use of chemical fertilizers can be traced to the end of World War II, when munitions plants began to convert from producing nitrogen-based bombs to nitrogen-based fertilizers in order to maintain production and stay in business. Some observers have noted that World War II actually never ended; it just changed fronts.

If the benefits of an abundant supply of cheap food outweighed the harm caused in producing it, then proponents of industrial agriculture could argue that such actions are justified. But are 99-cent hamburgers a suitable trade-off for non-lethal drinking water? Who made the decision that we were going to forgo thriving ecosystems so that food processors like Cargill, ADM, Coca-Cola, and Nestlé could have access to cheap ingredients? One only needs to consider the rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer to wonder whether we're getting our money's worth.

Research conducted by the Institute for Food and Development Policy, (Food First) has found that throughout the world smaller, diversified farming systems are upwards of 1000% more productive in terms of the overall amount of food produced than large-scale industrial farms. Food First has also found that there is already plenty of food for every-

one and that the push by industry and governments for even larger yields is not solving the underlying problems of poverty and lack of access to productive land. There are alternatives to blue babies, dead fish, and hunger, but none that earn agribusiness the enormous profits as in the present way of doing food.

For farming to be ecologically sound it must be economically viable. This means rewarding those whose farming does not compromise the surrounding ecosystem and our health. As consumers, we can do this by paying what they ask. Sustainably-produced local food reflects the true cost of production and often a very small profit. It is unreasonable, and perhaps reflects a common ignorance about how good food is produced, to expect those who keep us fed and the land and water viable to be martyrs.

As citizens, we can lobby and agitate for an overhaul of the federal subsidy system that prioritizes high commodity yields, which reward corporate agribusiness at the expense of diverse, ecologically sound farming. If those who practiced just and sustainable farming were eligible for federal subsidies, a price support system was put in place, and agribusiness oligopolies were broken up we would be looking at a much different, and much healthier, food system.

Bob St. Peter is the executive director of The Good Life Center at Forest Farm in Harborside, Maine, the last home of pioneering homesteaders Helen and Scott Nearing. He can be reached at bob@goodlife.org.

There are alternatives to blue babies, dead fish, and hunger, but none that earn agribusiness the enormous profits as in the present way of doing food.

Nestlé Cargill™



Our Bodies, Our Environment

by Nancy Price

Our bodies are a "natural" environment, a complex ecosystem of many separate systems (nervous, hormone, immune, etc.), beneficial organisms (digestive bacteria), and the array of chemical molecules that run the complex messaging system that turns on or off the 20,000-plus genes in each of our cells to make them function.

Toxic Trespass Without Our Consent

Corporations have no right to harm these natural systems of our bodies. Yet, armed with corporate personhood, they do so with impunity.

After WW II, corporate/political corruption caused the failure of the federal regulatory system. Since then, tens of thousands of chemicals in the products of modern life have not been tested for toxicity. In the process of manufacture, use and discard, these chemicals pollute our air, land, water and food. And they are mainly stored in our fatty tissue creating a serious "body burden."

Since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, we know a great deal about how pollution affects our "personal" environment, lives and health. She outlined the basics that prevail today: How business and industry, along with "their" scientists, engage in suppression or falsification of information, cover-ups, lies, and intimidation; How federal and state regulatory agencies are hi-jacked, not least by the revolving-door between government and the private sector; How corporate control of science, especially alliances with universities, undermines objective research to study links between toxic chemicals and disease; How deceptive advertising shapes consumer understanding and choice, and deflects "bad" news; How doctors and authority figures peddle untested products giving them a gloss of approval.

Even knowing the effect of lead poisoning in children in 1906, National Lead launched their lead-white "Dutch Boy" brand paint for homes and children's rooms to make them bright and clean, and "help guard their health." In the mid '20s, General Motors and DuPont, knowing the hazards, marketed leaded gasoline.

In the mid '30s several chemicals that mimic the natural hormone estrogen were shown to produce cancer in both male and female bodies. Scientific research now shows that trace amounts of these persistent hormone-disrupting chemicals and heavy metals (lead, mercury) can cause life-threatening diseases and disrupt our normal cognitive and neurological development from conception to grave. Sandra Steingraber and Theo Colborn (see book list) show how a mother's "body burden" affects the development of the fetus and content of

breast milk. Our accumulated body burden—even many years after exposure—also creates a "precondition" for: cancer; serious male and female reproductive and fertility problems; faulty immune systems; and diseases of older age like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The Cure—Civic Action

We, the People, must assert our fundamental and inalienable right to be free from involuntary invasion of our bodies by corporate pollution. We must harken back to the early regulatory thinking that used precaution to protect the public good. There are two clear steps for community action. The first is to use the Precautionary Principle Ordinance as adopted in 2003 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, which states that the City may act with "precaution" to prevent harms to the environment and protect public health even when full scientific evidence about cause and effect is lacking. The second is passing a "Chemical Trespass Ordinance," like that of Liberty Township in Pennsylvania, which prohibits chemical bodily trespass within Liberty Township. It also establishes strict liability and burden of proof standards for chemical trespass and subordinates chemical corporations to the people of the Township.

Suggested reading and resources:

Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment, by Sandra Steingraber, 1997.

Our Stolen Future, Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanski and John Peterson Myers, 1997. Also www.ourstolenfuture.org

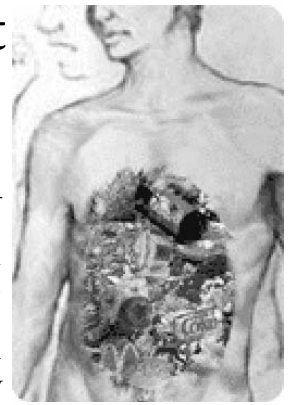
Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution, by Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, 2002

The Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall, and Deadly Persistence of the Product That Defined America, Allan M. Brandt, 2007.

Google San Francisco Precautionary, there are many good articles

Go to Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, www.celdf.org and on left, under *New Ordinances*, scroll down to Corporate Chemical Trespass Ordinance.

Nancy Price is the Co-chair of the National AfD Council and the Western Coordinator of the *Defending Water for Life Campaign*.



Business and industry, along with "their" scientists, engage in suppression or falsification of information, cover-ups, lies, and intimidation.

ExxonMobil Influences Energy & Environmental Policy

By Mary White

ExxonMobil, the world's largest company, has had undue influence over national energy and environmental policy. Shortly after Bush was elected in 2000, Cheney set up the Energy Transition Task Force in which Exxon played an important part.¹

In 2001, at the behest of ExxonMobil, Phil Cooney, a lawyer and lobbyist from the American Petroleum Institute, was appointed Chief of Staff of the President's Council on Environmental Quality. Cooney was essentially a watchdog within the administration shaping policy for ExxonMobil. When the *New York Times* broke the story that he was heavily editing the Environmental Quality reports, Cooney resigned and took a position at ExxonMobil.

In 2002, the National Resources Defense Council attained a memo from ExxonMobil to President Bush on global warming policy that contained a hit list of people from the Clinton administration. At the top was Bob Watson, the chairman of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and an outspoken supporter of strong action against global warming. A vote was taken at the U.N. and Watson was replaced.

ExxonMobil has supported 29 groups generating fraudulent information about global warming. They demand that news media always present "both" sides of the global warming "debate," despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of scientists agree that human activity is a contributing factor as opposed to a well-paid handful claiming the opposite.

The Wall Street Journal reported on January 11, 2007 that with a Democratic-controlled Congress Exxon expects regulations on emissions. In response, they are busy pulling together meetings of industry leaders to assure themselves a role in determining what those regulations will be "so they escape with minimum economic pain." The debate

is whether to impose a tax on upstream producers or downstream users. Tufts University Economics Professor Gilbert Metcalf, argues that you can oversee the majority of emissions by controlling the large producers. He also notes that ExxonMobil, by contrast, wants the controls to be downstream and as broad based as possible—in other words, totally unmanageable. ExxonMobil also claims it is easier to replace electricity with alternative energy sources than it is to replace liquid fuel. In other words, control them not us.

Ross Gelbspan, author of the book on global warming, *Boiling Point*, says that the future of civilization is at stake, and ExxonMobil is only concerned about the return to their stockholders. He calls them "criminals against humanity."

So what can we do? The group Expose Exxon says: 1. Don't buy their products, 2. Ask candidates if they are taking money from Exxon, 3. Write all of your politicians—repeatedly.

¹ See The film *Out of Balance: ExxonMobil's Impact on Climate Change*, a Joe Public Film.

Mary White has coordinated the AfD national office, is a former AfD Council member and is on the North Bridge AfD Chapter steering committee.



U.S. Department of Energy Peak Oil Report

The U.S. Department of Energy's report *Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, & Risk Management* is an eye opener. While the report states that world peak oil will produce a crisis like we have never seen, it narrowly sees the crisis as a liquid fuels problem rather than an energy crisis. The recommended solution: replace liquid fuel with liquefied coal, oil derived from oil shale, and bio-mass—totally ignoring global warming!

The report recommends transitioning as a crash program in order to avoid "lengthy environmental reviews and lengthy public involvement." It states that starting sooner would waste resources! A chart shows scientists' predictions of the peak-oil onset ranging from 2008 to 2025. If the scientists are right, we don't have 20 years.

There is no mention of how other sectors of society, such as agriculture, will be affected. Nor does it suggest changing to locally based economies requiring less fuel; sustainable solutions; conservation; or preserving oil as the precious commodity it is. Of course, the lead author, Robert L. Hirsch, is a former ARCO executive.

The report can be found on the EPA website at: http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil_Peaking_NETL.pdf with a summary on pages 64-67.

An Editor in the White House

Handwritten revisions and comments by Philip A. Cooney, chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, appear on two draft reports by the Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. Mr. Cooney's changes were incorporated into later versions of each document, shown below with revisions in bold.

"STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE PROGRAM," DRAFT TEXT, OCT. 2002

- 14 wetlands will expand in areas where meltwater resulting from deeper and longer thaw
- 15 periods does not have a natural drainage path to the ocean.
- 16
- 17 Warming will also cause reductions in mountain glaciers and advance the timing of the melt
- 18 of mountain snow peaks in polar regions. In turn, runoff rates will change and flood
- 19 potential will be altered in ways that are currently not well understood. There will be
- 20 significant shifts in the seasonality of runoff that will have serious impacts on native
- 21 populations that rely on fishing and hunting for their livelihood. These changes will be
- 22 further complicated by shifts in precipitation regimes and a possible intensification and
- 23 increased frequency of extreme hydrologic events. Reducing the uncertainties in current
- 24 understanding of the relationships between climate change and Arctic hydrology is critical

staying from research strategy with speculative findings please here.

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT, NOV. 2002

Warming could also lead to changes in the water cycle in polar regions. Reducing the uncertainties ...

FINAL REPORT, JULY 2003

The paragraph does not appear in the final report.

graphic: math.ucr.edu

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JUSTICE RISING is a publication of **The Alliance for Democracy**, whose mission is to end the domination of our politics, our economics, the environment, and our culture by large corporations. The Alliance seeks to establish true economic and political democracy and to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy.

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Nancy Price and Lou Hammann

Co-Chairs of the AFD National Council
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Justice Rising

by Jim Tarbell



Our world has been polluted. After two centuries of human industrial activities, the vital natural systems that sustain us are on the verge of collapse. Just outside my window in flowing fields overlooking the Pacific, toxic remnants of an old mill lurk in the bushes. Up the road a 435 acre ocean-front mill closed down in 2002. The corporate owner said the environmental damage was no worse than a gas station.

Only the persistent demands of a small dedicated group of local citizens forced the investigators to find dioxins, PCBs and a series of toxic anomalies intentionally buried out of view. This is a tale repeated across the nation and around the globe. Corporations have used rights their judicial friends gave them to avoid scrutiny and accept responsibility for this environmental destruction their production processes and consumer products have saddled on the world.

As the nation's citizens realize the proportions of this calamity their anger has begun to boil. This smoldering pot of public resentment threatens the power of economic and political elites. In an attempt to keep a lid on this discontent, the FBI has begun charging vandals trying to protect the environment with terrorism.

They have yet to charge the farmers of Pennsylvania with terrorism. These brave souls have begun a process where all successful social movements have gone—changing the Constitution. Only by getting judge-made corporate rights out of any interpretation of our Constitution and rights of nature into the constitution will the movement to save the natural systems of our world have a chance of saving the planet.

Not until the burdens of environmental destruction are truly borne by those who create them will our production and consumption patterns change. Not until we embrace the fact that we are part of nature and not until an economic framework is devised that accounts for the huge environmental costs of our factories and waste disposal systems will sustainable human survival be possible on earth.

That is the topic of our next *Justice Rising*: *Moving from the Extraction Economy to the Restoration Economy*. Restoring our economy, environment and community life is essential for a truly sustainable life style. Please join us in this undertaking. The deadline for articles will be August 1. Thanks for joining in.

North Bridge Chapter Joins Global Warming Symposium and Fair

by Mary White

Coordinated by Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Education and many volunteers, the Global Warming Symposium on March 24 drew some 400 to 500 high spirited participants from around the area. The keynote address by Marc Breslow, from the Mass Climate Action Network started the day off with real specifics about what a community can do. It was followed by presentations throughout the day on saving energy, greening town buildings, recycling, increasing a home's energy efficiency, wind energy, and the new energy initiatives the state is taking. Sixty ven-

dors took part in the fair – from young students exhibiting energy efficient light bulbs, to socially responsible investment councilors, to water filter and other environmentally conscious small business people. Local businesses donated everything from door prizes to food, to balloons and plants, to free services. Our local North Bridge Alliance Chapter was among the vendors with information on water privatization, peak oil and ExxonMobil's influence on public energy policy. We were impressed with the high level of interest shown by those who crowded around our table.





Joe Seidita and Kevin Danaher hit up the crowd at the 2000 Convention in Davis.



Paul Cienfuegos informs the Davis Convention on corporate personhood as panelists Jan Edwards, David Cobb, Doug Hammerstrom, Bill Meyers and Jim Tarbell look on.



Ruth Caplan and others dance up a skit on popular defeat of Corporate Domination at 2004 AfD Convention in Boston.

Announcing the 2007 AfD National Convention!

Thursday November 1 to Sunday November 4, Tucson, Arizona
Save These Dates. Mark Your Calendar.

by Nancy Price

Planning is underway for our Convention. We look forward to a full representation of chapters and members at this convention.

Thursday evening, November 1, we will gather together for dinner and an after-dinner social hour to renew old friendships and welcome new members. There's a lot to catch up on since our last convention in Boston in 2004.

Friday, November 2, we focus on skills-workshops such as how to create T.V. and radio programs, interviewing techniques, publicity and media skills, alliance and network-building skills, and we will provide plenty of time for chapters and members from each region to meet together to share planning for education and action in their areas. Please let Barbara Clancy, AfD Office Manager, know if you have specific skills you might contribute to these workshops. Write her at afd@thealliancefordemocracy.org with "Convention" in the subject line.

Saturday, November 3, we will discuss our campaigns and how to reframe our work to focus on the corporate actor and the ways we can assert the rights of people and our communities over the rights of corporations. With the 2008 election coming up, the message and mission of the Alliance is crucial.

On Sunday morning, November 4, Lou Hammann, AfD Co-Chair, will give an illustrated talk on the

Hundredfold Farm Co-housing Community, the intentional community he and his wife Pat have created in Gettysburg PA, with now more than ten families in homes. Their community is self-sufficient in energy production and recycles its wastewater. It is a model in microcosm of how our communities could be designed to be "off the grid" and sustainable. This will provide a starting point for discussion of how some AfD chapters and members are now working with others to create local and regional sustainable economies and communities.

More details and registration information will be coming soon! Remember to save these dates!

From the Program Committee: Nancy Price, Lou Hammann, Ruth Caplan, Bonnie Preston, Jacqui Brown Miller, Peter Mott, Jean Maryborn, CJ Jones, and Vikki Savee



Ted Dooley and Lou Hammann wrap themselves in AfD quilt at the Boston Convention.

photos: Jim Tarbell

Two Special Events Connected to the AfD Convention

Pre-Convention, Democracy School, October 30th-November 1

AfD will host a pre-convention Democracy School in Tucson from the evening of Tuesday, October 30th until Thursday noon, November 1st, taught by Thomas Linzey of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) and AfD's Ruth Caplan. If you've wondered why grassroots struggles are not winning ecological sanity and democratic self-governance, attend Democracy School and learn how to reframe issue-oriented work in ways that confront corporate control on a powerful single front—people's constitutional rights. You'll learn what other communities have done and how AfD members and chapters can, in their community, assert the peoples' rights over corporate privilege to end corporate rule.

Post-Convention, Border Tour, November 5th & 6th

After the convention, November 5th and 6th, you can take a two-day trip, by 15-passenger van, to the border region and Nogales, Mexico, hosted by Borderlinks, a bi-national non-profit organization that offers travel seminars exploring issues that shape life on the border region. On this guided trip—with an interpreter—we'll stay in Nogales, with opportunities to meet, talk and share meals with community members who are struggling daily with the economic and social impacts of NAFTA and free-trade and finding ways to resist and organize for community survival.

Minority Rule Pervades Constitution and International Trade Agreements

by Jacqui Brown Miller

In the late 1800s, the Supreme Court began a trend of interpreting the U.S. Constitution as granting the property or corporate class the right to protect its property, yet denying average citizens the right to preserve a healthful environment and engage in community democracy.

The Court's treatment of the Constitution's Commerce Clause gives an example of this trend. This clause gives Congress exclusive and sweeping power to regulate interstate commerce. Conversely, states have "police powers" to protect health, safety, and welfare. But, the Court limits state police power under the so-called "dormant Commerce Clause," reasoning that congressional power over interstate commerce leaves no room for states to discriminate against or overly burden commerce.

Justice Clarence Thomas has dissented, reasoning that "the negative Commerce Clause has no basis in the text of the Constitution." Still, the Court routinely allows corporations to use the clause to invalidate state and local health and safety laws.

The dormant Commerce Clause is like "corporate personhood. It's made up by judges and used by corporations to strike down democratically enacted environmental laws, so wealthy corporate owners can

protect property and the ability to operate at a handsome profit, regardless of external costs to society. In this way, the Court favors the ability of those with money and property to enforce their rights to engage in commerce, unfettered by communities trying to protect their well being.

This trend is also now cemented into the documents governing the globalization of commerce. World Trade Organization rulemaking on trade issues is done away from local and national democratic decision-making in inaccessible international venues. The private sector makes the decisions. Yet, the public bears the social and environmental costs stemming from corporate practices allowed after local, state, and federal democratically enacted laws are struck down as "barriers to trade."

Similarly, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) includes unprecedented corporate investment protections. NAFTA allows a corporation to sue a foreign government in a secret tribunal if a regulation adversely affects one of its investments. If it wins, foreign taxpayers pay. This is an extraordinary attack on governments' ability to regulate in the public interest.

This is a serious problem that we can fix if we understand its roots and fight back strategically. The root problem is a fundamental lack of democracy—decisions are made by wealthy minorities.

The Court has assisted wealthy minority rule by "reading into" the constitution (okay inventing) "provisions" like the dormant Commerce Clause and corporate personhood. Additionally, it invented the idea that money is protected free speech and that campaign finance laws must be invalidated if they diminish the "market place of ideas," regardless of how these laws would enhance the democratic conversation. These doctrines seem designed to deny regular citizens their ability to act as the source of decision making.

Creating authentic democracy is not easy. But we stand a fighting chance only if we aim to eradicate the things that actively deny us our right of self-governance.

Jacqui Brown Miller has been a government and environmental lawyer since 1996.



graphic: kjersten Jeppesen

The Court favors the ability of those with money and property to enforce their rights to engage in commerce, unfettered by communities trying to protect their well being.

Why use Commerce to Regulate the Environment?

Congress passes environmental laws to protect the environment from harm and, in turn, protect humans in the long-term. Yet, the powers exclusively enumerated to Congress in the Constitution do not include environmental protection. So, as sort of a contrivance, Congress reaches for its power to regulate interstate commerce.

While this power to regulate interstate commerce is sweeping, the Supreme Court has been pulling in the reins when it comes to the environment. Recently, the Court invalidated Clean Water Act regulations because the regulated isolated wetlands lacked sufficient connection with interstate commerce.

But wait a minute. Do we really want commerce as the contrived justification for protecting the environment? Doesn't this set up an argument that everything under the sun relates to interstate commerce? Isn't arguing that everything impacts commerce heading toward failure in lawsuits because corporations want to invalidate state and local law—under the dormant commerce clause—for impeding interstate commerce? If we want to be logical and consistent, what do we do?

Cormac Cullinan, in *Rights of Nature, a Manifesto for Earth Justice*, argues for constitutional rights of nature. This would provide a constitutional peg for environmental laws rooted in an understanding of our interconnectedness with and interdependence on nature. This also would impose on government a trust duty to use the precautionary principle and disallow actions that would threaten our sustained, healthy, and common future. Citizens would have the power to enforce this duty in the courts. Now wouldn't that be a nice change?

Rural Communities Act to End Corporate Domination

by Ruth Caplan

The Alliance was created to "End Corporate Domination." When corporations invade every nook and cranny of our existence, where do we begin to respond to this daunting call to action?

The answer lies with action that can be taken right in

our own communities, which, when such actions reach a critical mass, have the potential to overturn "settled" law created by our courts and drive the rights of nature straight into the U.S. Constitution.

It all began in the most unlikely of places—rural, conservative Pennsylvania townships. This was not the result of progressives getting together. In fact, it was in reaction to a coalition made up of labor, environmentalists, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and the Democratic governor, which succeeded in getting a law passed to establish regulations that would reduce the pollution from CAFO's (Concentrated Animal Feedlot Operations).

Trouble was, farmers did not want these corporate hog farms in their communities period. They called Thomas Linzey with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) in rural Chambersburg and said they wanted him to help them keep the CAFO's out. Well, Linzey knew from his previous legal assistance to communities that the regulatory system was not going to do it. Together they took a radically different approach. The towns passed local ordinances that banned corporate farming altogether, with an exception for local family-based corporations. Instead of focusing on the regulatory action, the ordinances focused on the corporate actor.

These towns did not get down on their knees and plead with the corporations to be "responsible" or "accountable" to the community. They asserted their local authority over the corporations in order to protect their local farms and the health and welfare of their communities.

Then two teenagers drove their all-terrain vehicles over a field freshly spread with sludge from municipal treatment plants. Within days, Daniel Pennock, one of the teenagers, was dead from inhaling toxins from the sludge. It was a wake-up call. Farmers had been sold a bill of goods. What was supposed to be a boon to farmers—free fertilizer—

was in fact laced with an unknown mix of toxins.

Townships now knew how to respond. They banned corporations from spreading sludge in their towns.

The idea spread to western Pennsylvania, deep in mining country, where the coal companies were using long wall coal mining techniques to tunnel horizontally deep under homes and farms without supporting pillars. Homes cracked. Ponds disappeared. Water had to be trucked in to feed the livestock. Blaine Township, knowing that in the not too distant future the long walls would be coming to their township, has taken the incredibly brave step of passing an ordinance banning corporate mining in their town. Are our towns that brave?

As with the 19th century Populists, these farmers were learning just how the system of corporate domination works. They learned about how corporations had gained protection as "persons" under the Bill of Rights through "settled" law and they learned how in our history citizens have created movements to overturn "settled" law—the abolitionists and the suffragettes. In some townships they themselves took on "settled" law by denying corporations the rights of persons within the township as part of their ordinances against corporate farming or sludge spreading or coal mining.

Today over 100 communities in Pennsylvania have passed laws grounded in asserting community rights over corporate rights.

Inspired by Pennsylvania, the citizens of Barnstead NH became the first town in the country to pass an ordinance banning corporations from taking their water. The ordinance also denies corporations the rights of persons in Barnstead, as well as denying them protection under the commerce clause and contracts clause of the U.S. Constitution or similar provisions in the NH Constitution. The Alliance's Defending Water for Life campaign triggered local interest in taking this approach and provided strategic support such as sponsoring a Democracy School in Barnstead.

Over 100 communities in Pennsylvania have passed laws grounded in asserting community rights over corporate rights.



Tom Linzey helping citizens to establish local control and end corporate domination.

photo: CELDF

Groups Working on Solutions to Save the Planet

Rachel's Democracy & Health News

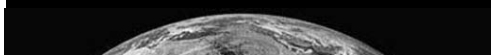
A product of the Environmental Research Foundation, *Rachel's Weekly* has been giving readers news

and resources for environmental justice and provided understandable scientific information about human health and the environment since 1986. Almost each one deals with corporate power and the environment. Their website www.rachel.org also has some very valuable databases including links to thousands of groups working on destruction of the environment by corporations, a vast library with almost 40 articles on Corporate Power and the Environment and best of all, a long searchable list of What Works Now.

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) was formed to provide free and affordable legal services to community-based groups and local governments working to protect their quality of life and the natural environment through building sustainable communities. Increasingly, that means teaming up with people and their municipal representatives to mount campaigns that challenge the legal clout of corporations to overrule decisions made by citizens for their communities. Check out their website at www.celdf.org to see the almost three dozen local ordinances they have helped pass including ones that: ban corporate waste, mining, farming and chemical trespass; recognize the rights of nature; establish sustainable energy policies and eliminates corporate claims to constitutional rights. Find out how your city or local government can become a truly self-governing entity and check out their Daniel Pennock Democracy School.



CLIMATE CRISIS COALITION



The Climate Crisis Coalition seeks to broaden the circle of individuals, organizations and constituencies engaged in the global warming issue, to link it with other issues and to provide a structure to forge a common agenda and advance action plans with a united front. See their website at www.climatecrisiscoalition.org for more information.



The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) were established to bring together forestry and marine stakeholders to guarantee that forests and oceans are managed sustainably. They establish strict standards for forests and fisheries and certify practitioners of those standards. Their label allows consumers to make intelligent choices for the planet's future.



Co-op America promotes social justice and environmental sustainability; demands an end to corporate irresponsibility; promotes green and fair trade business principles and helps build sustainable communities. Check out their campaigns to counter corporate destruction of the environment at www.coopamerica.org.

Sierra Club's Corporate Accountability Committee sees that systems of corporate governance, and corporate abuse of power interfere with community protection of the environment. Their website at www.sierraclub.org/committees/cac/ lists their three task forces: Shareholder Action; Confronting Corporate Power; and Water Privatization, which is calling on Nestlé to comply with any vote taken by a local community prohibiting Nestlé from taking their spring water.



SIERRA CLUB
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Friends of the Earth (FOE) sees that multinational corporations, in their quest for higher profits, are wrecking the world's resources. Their Corporate Accountability Campaign promotes proactive policies to ensure that multinational companies act in a responsible and accountable manner. They are also looking at the environmental impacts of nanotechnology, ensuring the safety of our foods and exposing the risks of factory farms.

Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and Amazon Watch have long taken on multi-national corporations for their destruction of the environment. RAN's Global Finance Campaign looks at the destructive investment decisions of the world's largest financial institutions and seeks to chart a course towards a sustainable global economy. Amazon Watch has spearheaded the Chevron Toxic campaign to hold ChevronTexaco accountable for its toxic contamination of the Ecuadorian



Amazon. Its actions at Chevron headquarters in San Ramon CA support the precedent setting legal battle in Ecuador that is working under the authority of US laws.

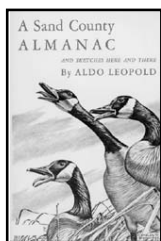


AMAZON WATCH

Books on Corporate Environmental Destruction & the Rise of the Grassroots Solutions

by Jim Tarbell

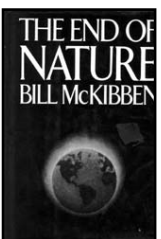
As the American commercial empire grew to global hegemony after World War II, a parallel movement took root to counter the horrendous environmental costs of the empire. Five books outline this history. Aldo Leopold, writing in the late 1940s in his prescient book, *A Sand County Almanac*, pointed out that human superiority lies in our ability to see the future and understand the cost of lost species, "not in Mr. Vannevar Bush's bombs or Mr. DuPont's nylons." He early recognized that the increasingly rapid "disappearance of plants and animal species...must...be regarded as symptoms of sickness in the land organism." He emphasized the need to create an ethic that embraces "land" as a broad biotic community of which we are part and dependent upon, and rejected "land" as simply property.



Fourteen years later, in the early 1960s, Rachel Carson in her seminal book, *Silent Spring*, alerted the world to the fact that our intervention into the natural biota with herbicides and pesticides had broad systemic impacts on multiple layers of species including ourselves. Her connection of the poisoning of the planet to corporate policies laid bare the extent of our environmental and political catastrophe.



Then writing in the late 1980s, Bill McKibben in *The End of Nature* pointed out that wild nature could no longer be separated from human society. His premise is that we cannot control nature, but our changes to nature are out of control. Climate change threatens to unsettle the balances that the natural biota has used to maintain stability on our planet for eons.



Ross Gelbspan's *Boiling Point*, published earlier this decade, makes the connection between the public denial of global warming and specific policies of the oil and coal industries that saw their future threatened by the climate crisis. He points out that, "What began as a normal business response by the fossil fuel lobby—denial and delay—has now attained the status

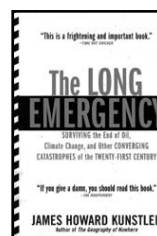


of a crime against humanity."

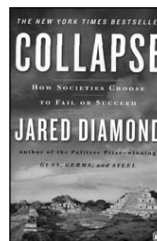
Published this month, *Blessed Unrest* by Paul Hawken adds to this history and more. It covers 200 years of environmental and grassroots activist thinking that has led to the creation of thousands of grassroots social justice, environmental and indigenous groups. Hawken sees this as the largest movement in global history, yet one that is largely unseen by politicians and unreported by the media. "The diversity of this movement, its brilliant ideas, innovative strategies and centuries old histories...is...humanity's genius and the unstoppable movement to reimagine our relationship to the environment and one another." As a decentralized organism this movement "is the most complex coalition of human organizations. the world has ever seen...What will emerge is a living intelligence that creates miracles every second." It is this movement that will save the planet.



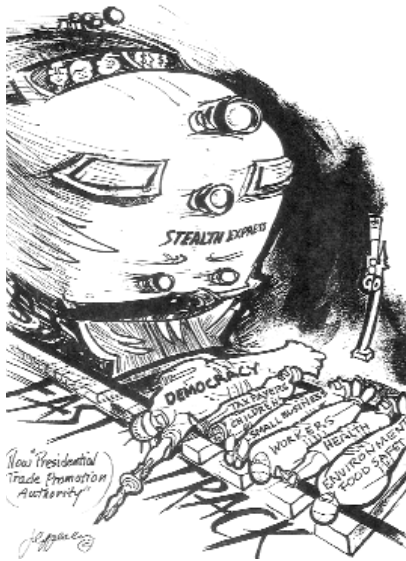
Others looking at the impending catastrophe brought on by the perfect storm of resource depletion, climate change and the breakdown of multiple natural systems caused by the corporate pollution of our oceans and soils are not quite so optimistic. James Howard Kunstler in *The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of Oil, Climate Change, and other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century* looks at population growth and profligate consumerism as the drivers behind the grim future. He feels that corporate executives have simply been misled by economists and that the "consequences of their action ranging from the destruction of local communities to climate change" were merely "unintended consequences." In the end he figures we will all have to go local.



Finally, Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* is a look at the long history of the collapse of various human civilizations. Then in the final section he applies these lessons to our present plight. Herein he points out that what makes money for a business...may be harmful to society as a whole. In the end he is cautiously optimistic, but it all depends on what we do.



"The diversity of this movement, its brilliant ideas, innovative strategies and centuries old histories...is...humanity's genius and the unstoppable movement to reimagine our relationship to the environment and one another."



graphic: Kjersten Jeppesen

Trading the Environment

Say "No deal" to the New Trade Deal

Democrats Fail to Deliver on "Fair" Trade Policy

by Nancy Price

Late on May 10th at a surprise news conference, Bush trade officials, Speaker Pelosi, and several House and Senate Democratic and Republican trade committee leaders announced the outline of a "deal" to facilitate new "bi-partisan" cooperation on trade. That's the hype. What's the reality?

Bush, the administration, free-traders in Congress and big business desperately want the Peru, Panama,

Colombia and South Korea trade agreements to pass Congress before Fast Track expires on June 30. They claim there's "conceptual" agreement to change certain provisions in these Bush-negotiated agreements, especially with Peru and Panama, and they hope to add Colombia, despite the fact that there has been a rash of labor union assassinations there. Showing flexibility on labor, the environment, and pharmaceuticals, the administration aims to grease the rails to get Fast Track renewed.

Let's be clear. When Congress passes Fast Track, they give authority to the Executive to negotiate trade agreements for the next five years, but also agree to the trade policy and goals spelled out in the 300-plus page "Fast Track" bill. This includes the number of trade agreements to be negotiated and goals to further lower trade barriers, open markets, and protect corporate profits and property. The question is whether the "deals" just announced would be included as benchmarks in the new Fast Track bill.

In Congress, momentum was growing to stop

these four trade agreements and Fast Track. Take note that in 2002, Fast Track barely passed Congress after a bitter fight. In 2005, CAFTA passed by two votes after last-minute strong-arm tactics. Recently, in the 2006 elections, 37 seats of "free traders" who voted for NAFTA, the WTO and Fast Track changed hands (7 Senate, 30 House). And, earlier this year, 71 freshman Democrats signed a letter urging Democratic leaders not to compromise on trade.

Unfortunately, these factors seemed to have been ignored in these most undemocratic, secret negotiations. There was no open discussion in committees, the Democratic party caucus, or on the floor of Congress. Representative Rangel and Senator Baucus, House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Chairs respectively, eager to "capitalize" on their new authority and power in the Democratically controlled Congress, seem to have negotiated this deal on their own "fast track."

Now Civil Society must remain vigilant and call for the binding legal text to be released and analyzed against the proposed conceptual "deals." Progress on labor, environmental and pharmaceutical provisions, and removal of the right of foreign port operators to operate U.S. ports is good. But, Public Citizen states that very important "fixes" are not part of the deal. These fixes include a ban on: off-shoring; Buy America procurement policies and NAFTA-Chapter 11-style foreign investor-rights protections. We have to make sure that these agreements cannot supercede federal or state laws on prevailing wage, recycled content, renewable energy; agriculture or food safety.

Public Citizen says you cannot paste some good provisions into bad NAFTA-like agreements. The content and process of this deal are very disappointing for the fair trade movement and will be opposed by all groups fighting for a new U.S. trade policy. Watch for AfD action alerts and stay informed at www.citizen.org/trade. Call your representative and senators and tell them what you think.

Stop the Fast Track Express NOW!

The "Fast Track" trade negotiating process expires on June 30th this year. Nixon cooked up Fast Track to take away Congress' constitutional authority over U.S. trade policy. The recent "trade deal" brokered in secret by Rep. Rangel, Chair of House Ways and Means and Sen. Max Baucus of Senate Finance Committees, that Speaker Pelosi has now to "sell" to Congress, is calculated to demonstrate that Bush and the United States Trade Representative are willing to negotiate with Congress on trade, but still on "fast track."

- But, under Fast Track, the White House picks the countries, negotiates trade deals, and signs agreements before Congress votes. Congressional hearings are a sham, because our elected representatives cannot offer amendments on the final text. Congress is limited to 20 hours of debate before a yes or no vote.
- Yet, now, Rangel and Baucus negotiated a deal in secret, leaving their Congressional colleagues in the dark. How democratic is this? In Nov. 2006, 37 candidates, 7 in the Senate and 30 in the House, won Congressional seats opposing free trade deals – like NAFTA, CAFTA, the WTO, and many bilateral agreements (FTAs).
- Call the U.S. Capitol at (202) 224-3121. Ask to be connected to your Representative and Senators. Ask for the "Trade Legislative Assistant" and say you oppose Fast Track and secretly brokered deals.
- We don't need Fast Track. We need new trade policy with representatives of civil society at the table and an open, fair, transparent process with full "democratic" debate on trade agreements that protect the rights of people, their communities and nature.



graphic: Matt Wuerker

Cap and Trade

Enclosing the Climate Commons

The good news is—the United States government has finally joined the rest of the world and seems ready to do something about climate change. The bad news is—as usual, what to do is being decided by giant corporations.

Let's agree that drastic measures must be taken to reduce carbon emissions by up to 90 percent. Right now the leading idea seems to be "Cap and Trade." Environmental proponents are quick to stress the "Cap" on emissions, but it's the "Trade" that really interests the big polluters. The basic scheme is to turn the "right" to create pollution into a form of property, distribute this newly created property only among the largest polluters for free and then let them sell it to each other. The value of the carbon credits rises with the lowering of caps as the polluters play ecological chairs. Each time the earth circles the sun, another chair is removed, the pollution caps are lowered, and the value of the carbon credit becomes greater. Cap and Trade creates an entirely new market, new types of property, new wealth and increased inequity.

In a recent interview, The News Hour reporter asked a Pew Trust spokeswoman a very good question. Why not give every person an equal amount of carbon credits and let everyone get in on the trading? After all, he said, we all pollute. The Pew answer was that it would be "too complicated." In fact, only the biggest polluters were to be let in on the Cap and Trade. The rest of the "smaller polluters" would be regulated. The term "small polluters" covers every type of manufacturing from cars to computers and even households. So basically, this is regulation for most of us, but not for the biggest polluters. It seems they will escape regulation. Europe has a similar plan. But it has not been successful in reducing emissions, many say, because the credits were given for free to the big polluters.

The Pew Trust reports that Cap and Trade is the preferred choice of the large energy corpora-

tions. I wonder why? Could it be that they will be the recipients of this new government property giveaway; a benefit that they receive because they are the biggest producers of greenhouse emissions? And what is the actual goal here— are we trying to drastically cut greenhouse gasses in a race to save all life on earth, or are we catering to the preferred choices of the energy corporations?

How do you think this will play out in real-world America? Pew also believes that the Congress will act on climate change soon. If not this Congress, then the next one. We have watched this dance long enough to predict the steps. For the Cap and Trade to really work, the caps must be set low enough to deeply cut emissions year after year for the next 50 years.

Do you think Congress, controlled by either party, will take drastic action on climate change? Or do you think they will listen to their benefactors, the big corporations, and move slowly to avoid hurting business and the economy? Do you think regulations for the so-called "small polluters" will have any teeth, or will they remain pretty much as they are now, a slap on the wrist and go on polluting?

The climate, air, atmosphere and ozone layer are common to all life on earth. It would be hard to argue otherwise. The destruction of these commons was led by corporate interests. Now these same players want to privatize and profit from the planet's last gasp.

Schemes like Cap and Trade just put off facing the truth. Humans, and especially Americans, use more than the planet can support. We have to stop now. If that's bad for business, well so is ecological disaster.

Jan Edwards is the creator of the "Tapestry of the Commons," which is online at www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org. She is a member of the Redwood Coast Chapter of the AFD.

The basic scheme is to turn the "right" to create pollution into a form of property, distribute this newly created property only among the largest polluters for free and then let them sell it to each other.

Replacing the Corporate Model with a Natural Community

by Lou Hammann

During a recent cold snap, we set our thermostat at 60 degrees, but our solar-friendly little dwelling maintained a temperature of 65 to 67 degrees.

By December 2007, the Hundredfold Farm Community, near Gettysburg PA, should be a multi-generational village of fourteen homes dedicated to energy efficiency and resource conservation. Right now, we own seven certificates of occupancy and four more houses in advance stages of planning. Hundredfold Farm is one of those modest ventures that cannot save the planet by itself, but is an effort in the right direction.

To realize our dream, we had to negotiate with Township supervisors, zoning boards, planning boards, Pennsylvania DEP, County Planning advisors, banks not famous for their imaginations, and, of course, a local rumor mill. As you read on, take time to check out our web site: www.hundredfoldfarm.org. Even then you may not believe the story it tells.

Hundredfold Farm is a co-housing community whose members are dedicated to energy and resource conservation. Currently there are seven families living in modular homes designed for maximum energy efficiency. Within another two months we should have four more homes ready for occupancy. It should not take us much longer to complete the full compliment of fourteen households. When that is done, a project stretching over seven years will be in place—though, we suspect, not even then completely realized.

This intentional community's environmental dedication is best appreciated by observing its two main "technological" features. On the roof of each house is an array of photo voltaic (pv) cells, generating an average of 75% of each home's electricity needs. A solar panel is mounted above the p.v.'s to pre-heat all the water the house requires. Other design features further contribute to energy conversation. The pre-fabricated Superior Walls have a very high "R Value." Most of the floors are dark tile. Windows also have high "R value" as does the "green" siding. Several houses use insulated shades and shutters. The concrete slab on the bottom floor is installed with radiant heating. Two other practical fea-



The homes of Hundredfold Farm complete with solar panels on their roofs.

photo: Hunredfold Farms

tures are EnergyStar Rated appliances and non-incandescent lighting. And, of course, the orientation of the houses themselves make for maximum solar gain. During a recent cold snap, we set our thermostat at 60 degrees, but our solar-friendly little dwelling maintained a temperature of 65 to 67 degrees.

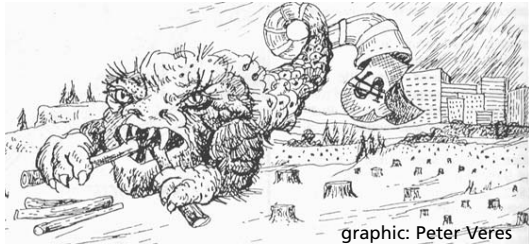
And then there is our water conservation project! You can see on the website a 30 by 100 foot greenhouse structure. This is the last phase in our water-recycling plan. There are three wells that supply the households with water. Each household dumps ALL of its wastewater—gray and black—into a power sewer that turns it into a slurry that is then pumped to the greenhouse. There it goes through a series of tanks that aerate the slurry and filter it through gravel and plant roots. The water continues its purification and filtration into and through another system of tanks and is then sprayed into a very large gravel bed three feet deep and planted with a dense growth of aquatic plants. Eventually the clean water, zapped with ultraviolet light, is diverted into a parallel plumbing system to be used for flushing bathroom waste—and the process starts again. Any surplus water that is not diverted for household flushing is sent through pipes and spread across the fields to irrigate our Christmas trees and rows of berries!

The community also maintains cooperatively a third of an acre organic garden. We make no compromises with inorganic fertilizer or pesticide in this venture. A local manure supply, a well-tended compost pile, and volunteer labor produce an amazing abundance of fresh vegetables and berries.

Hundredfold Farm is self-sufficient in water and should soon approach self-sufficiency in electricity. Some of us are hopeful that we will install two wind generators at the top end of our 80 acres.

For the most part, members of the community finance the project. If the web site and this account of Hundredfold Farm piques your curiosity, don't hesitate to contact Lou Hammann, Co-Chair of the AfD Council. However difficult it has been to have come this far in our corporation-free, enviro-tech-organic project, I can only say it has produced in many of us a sense of relief: We have stood up against the entropy of nature and our psychological inertia. Even if we have not definitively reversed those processes, for some of us a clear conscience counts for something. We are, after all, quite independent of the predatory influence of "the gangs of America."

Lou Hammann, a retired Professor of Religion and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, is a the Co-Chair of the Alliance for Democracy National Council.



graphic: Peter Veres

Human Weeds

Modern humans are weeds. Let a breeding couple get to a previously unexploited land, whether a tiny island or a continent, and soon enough it will be overrun by people at the expense of most other species.

It was not always that way. Ten million years ago ancestors and relatives to humans, including gorillas and chimpanzees, numbered less than two million individuals and were all confined to Africa. A million years ago homo erectus had migrated to Europe and Asia, but scattered about at low densities. Even a hundred thousand years ago homo sapiens still numbered in the low millions world wide. As recently as ten thousand years ago, after the Americas had been populated by humans, the world's population came in around five million people.

With the widespread adoption of agriculture, the population climbed more dramatically. By 1000 B.C. the human population may have reached 50 million; there were a number of cities with populations of over 50,000. A mere thousand years later, in the time of Augustus Caesar, 200 million people may have inhabited the world.

By the time European humans began their conquest of the Americas the population was in the 500 million range. The conversion of natural lands

to farmland continued to swell the population, but then the Industrial Revolution got underway as well. World population climbed to 1 billion around 1800 and to over 1.5 billion by 1900.

Up until 1900, human medicine was relatively primitive and often ineffective. But advances in biological science combined with the corporate profit motive began conquering big killers like yellow fever, malaria, and worm infestations. Modern medicine and global food networks prevented the usual natural mechanisms of population control, disease and starvation, from working in the 20th century. In A.D. 2000, the world population of humans was around 6 billion; at the other end of the teeter-totter, numerous species had gone extinct or declined severely.

About another half-billion people are alive today than there were 7 years ago. That is equal to the world's entire population in the Late Middle Ages.

In this era of global warming, corporate dominance of the debate about solutions means that the population issue will not be addressed. Higher human populations mean higher demand for everything from real estate to Priuses. Declining populations would require a whole new economic mindset that goes against the intrinsic values of for-profit corporations.

In high per capita consumption countries like the United States, tax laws still encourage people to have children. A rational policy for our era would be to double the income tax credit for a family's first child, give no credit for a second child, and penalize families with more than two children. Rights have to be balanced against responsibilities; no family should be encouraged to have more than two children given the real world situation that we face.

William P. Meyers is the author of The Santa Clara Blues: Corporate Personhood Versus Democracy. He serves on the Point Arena, CA school board and the board of the California Center for Community Democracy.

In this era of global warming, corporate dominance of the debate about solutions means that the population issue will not be addressed.



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Why You Should Care?

Toxic pollution in your neighborhood is a hazard to your health

Agricultural and Industrial chemicals pose a serious health risk. After almost two centuries of industrial and agroindustrial activities—much of that in an era when corporate owners freely took it as their prerogative to foul our common air, land and waters—almost every community in the United States has been impacted. The true nature of the devastation is only now coming to the surface. This provides a great opportunity for communities to start restoring the earth and save their future.

Community resources need protection

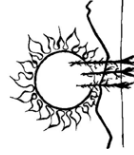
As pristine resources, including air and water, become more rare, they are a strong draw for corporate investors looking for new lands to plunder. Your local natural assets may be the next ones targeted. Make sure you know how to protect them.

Industrial interests are obscuring our environmental problems

Additional greenhouse gasses being spewed into the environment are mainly coming from corporate sources or products. Faced with ruin if the true costs of this pollution becomes known, corporations have mounted a multi-million dollar campaign to hide the truth, preventing our media from serving its democratic function.

Free trade spreads the devastation

Neoliberal trade agreements spread the industrial and consumptive lifestyles that are polluting the planet and threaten local initiatives to protect our health and the environment.



What You Can Do

Find out what toxics are in your neighborhood. Go to www.scorecard.org to find the registered toxic sites in your neighborhood. They also have a list of environmental justice groups or search for one on the web. Find one working in your area—discover what they know and support their efforts. If you have concerns about sites that have not been investigated, do some grassroots investigating of your own.

Start rights-based organizing in your community. Contact CELDF to find out how to protect your community from outside corporate predators. Arrange to hold a Democracy School in your community. Research the local ordinances that CELDF has helped pass and educate your local politicians about the possibilities.

Join the international movement to confront global warming. Most change begins at the grassroots. Get your local government to join the effort to stop global warming. Check out www.iclei.org. Join the Earth Day Network to establish a climate education campaign in your area. See www.earthday.net

Institute the Precautionary Principle. Help your local community use the Precautionary Principle, which brings democracy and science to environmental decision making. GreenAction and Environmental Commons have been active in getting the Precautionary Principle adopted by local governments in San Francisco and Mendocino County CA and are happy to help other communities do the same.