

## ECONEWS #184

A monthly newsletter funded by your donations that dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

A big thankyou for your kind donations to Christine Tomori, Brandy Patterson, Gerry Howell Jones, Sheila Sayer, Dan Schubart, Joan Tiernan, Paul Gareau, Denise Dickson, Ocean Lum, Nancy Carson, Robin Krause, Katy Bloomfield, Chislett Manson & Co, Gifford La Rose, Ruth Masters, Daphne Taylor, Jean Matheson, Patricia Finlay, Corinna Scott, and Sydney Langhelt.

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For EcoNews by mail, call Guy 881-1304. By email, see [www.earthfuture.com/econews](http://www.earthfuture.com/econews)

EcoNews does not share its lists.

<i>The Money</i>	June	July	Sept
Copies printed	1800	1800	1750
Sent by email	2976	2972	2985
Print, postage	\$689	\$776	\$775
Editorial	\$450	\$450	\$450
Donations	\$400	\$940	You?
Advertising	\$25	\$20	
Balance	\$1489	\$1223	

### THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. Max 5 lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

\* **Charming guest room**, \$30/night.

Cook St Village, ocean. 250-361-3102.

\* **Short term rental**, prime Fairfield location \$30/night. 250-382-3810.

\* **Syd's Demo Salvage**. Quality building materials. We also purchase homes. 250-381-1141.

\* **Pacific Gardens Cohousing** – a sustainable community under construction in Nanaimo 250-754-3060. [www.pacificgardens.ca](http://www.pacificgardens.ca)

\* **Couple looking for others** to share purchase of land (+50 acres) in Courtenay/Comox Valley area to build natural houses. Steve 744-2244.

\* **Saturday workshops** on making raw organic foods: Breads, nut pates & cheeses, soups, sauces, wraps, fermented foods, pies, chocolate desserts. \$15/2hrs. Susanne 744-2244.

\* **Swift Kick Computers**. Eco-friendly, servicing local business and personal computers at your location. All on-site transport fueled by used veggie oil. Call Peter 514-4815.

\* **Volunteers needed** for The City Farm in Fernwood. Please contact Angela at [cityfarmcentral@gmail.com](mailto:cityfarmcentral@gmail.com)

\* **Fresh organic** nuts & dried fruits - Bulk pre-order. [kamelita@telus.net](mailto:kamelita@telus.net)

### SEE-THEM-RUN

They're UVic students from Victoria, they love Africa, and they wanted to support sustainable youth educational projects to help reverse the downward cycle of poverty, famine, and disease. Erin van Wiltenburg (age 21) and Reuben Jentink (19) also love running – and since mid-April, they have run 100 marathons (4,200 km) from coast to coast across Namibia, Zambia, and Tanzania, inviting friends to sponsor them at \$100 per kilometre. At the end of August, they arrived back in Victoria. What can we say, apart from WAY TO GO!! You can sponsor one of their kilometres at [www.see-them-run.com](http://www.see-them-run.com).

### WELCOME BACK

EcoNews returns from its summer break fresh and invigorated to take on the world, breathe hope and determination into every issue, and strengthen our faith that Victoria, Vancouver Island and this whole amazing world can become what we dream it can be. If you have stories to share, events to list, or Actions to feature, please send them over! EcoNews is a small contribution to a better world, but we do our best to connect, comfort, and inspire.

### AVAAZ AMAZES

Personal despair about the growing global crisis is a direct function of disconnection and powerlessness. Climate change, hunger, warfare, poverty, the Middle East, the corruption of democracy in the USA - it all seems so overwhelming. Our tiny individual actions seem so pathetic compared to what's happening, and yet switching off does not make the despair go away. It simply etches it deeper into our souls. Unless we are careful, we risk turning into gloomy or angry cynics.

The spirit of life can never be suppressed, however. It's like a perennial Phoenix, always dreaming up new hopes, actions, and ways to intervene. In January 2007, a group of people who understood the power of the Internet decided it was time global opinion had a global voice. They founded Avaaz.org as a global web movement with a simple democratic mission: to close the gap between the world we have, and the world most people everywhere want. The Avaaz community now has 3.4 million

members in every country of the world, growing by 40,000 people a week, who have taken 7.7 million actions over issues as diverse as Tibet, the world food crisis, democracy in Zimbabwe, and the Israel/Palestine conflict. They have helped secure a global treaty banning cluster bombs, successfully campaigned for a ceasefire in Gaza, helped bring the President of Sudan to trial for genocide in Darfur, and pushed the G-8 leader to do more than waffle on climate change. To add your voice to the global chorus, go to [www.avaaz.org](http://www.avaaz.org). And have hope: when it comes to global organizing, we have only just begun.

### STUTTGART GOES GREEN

The southern German city of Stuttgart, home to the Mercedes and Porsche motor industries, is about to buy a fleet of 1200 light electric scooters that will be available at 250 charging stations throughout the city. For a monthly subscription of \$23, residents will be able to take a 30-minute trip whenever they like. The bikes will go 60 km before they need a 15-minute recharge, and a 30 km trip uses 250 watts of electricity – the same as burning a 100-watt light bulb for 2.5 hours. The city is buying the bikes from a British company, Ultra Motor, which is negotiating with 23 other European cities. In Phase 2, if all goes well, Stuttgart will buy 12,000 scooters. Germany is moving ahead rapidly with renewable electricity, but even if the electricity was totally coal-fired, a 30 km EV scooter trip would produce only 250 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>, compared to 30 times as much from burning 3 litres of gas in an efficient car that burns 10 litres/100km. The future is knocking on our door. See [www.ultramotor.com](http://www.ultramotor.com).

### THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF NATURE

The creation of democracy has been one of the fundamental breakthroughs for human civilization, and the recognition of legal rights for individuals is one of its foundation stones. Our *non-recognition* of Nature's rights, however, is one of the fundamental causes of the world's environmental crisis. In Ecuador, south of Colombia on South America's Pacific coast, a 130-member Constitutional Assembly has just approved a new constitution which (among many other things) grants fundamental recognition to Nature's rights. Article 1 states: "Nature or Pachamama, where life is reproduced

and exists, has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions, and its processes in evolution.” It goes on: “Every person, people, community or nationality will be able to demand recognition of rights for nature before public organisms (courts and government agencies). Article 2 states that “Nature has the right to an integral restoration.” Article 3 says: “The State will motivate natural and juridical persons as well as collectives to protect nature; it will promote respect towards all the elements that form an ecosystem.” Article 4 says “The State will apply precaution and restriction measures in all activities that can lead to extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.” The people of Ecuador vote on their new constitution on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Even if the vote fails, the flag of a new age has been raised, and the time will come, as a world, when we collectively turn away from our abusive behaviour, and extend to nature, and all her species, the same rights we have assigned to ourselves.

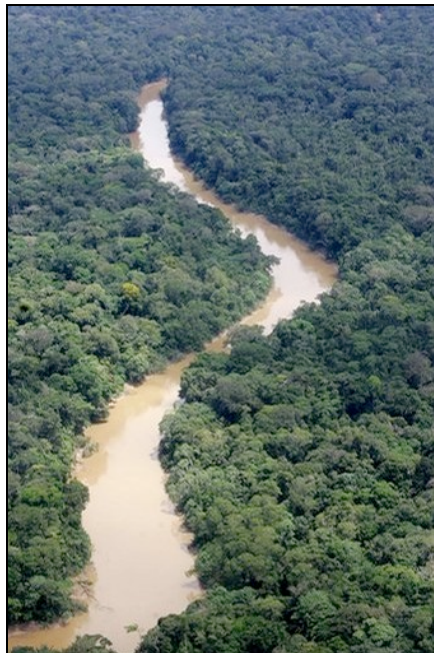
#### YASUNI AMAZON DREAMS

In the same land of Ecuador a dramatic story is unfolding which needs all our help. Ecuador has three major bioregions – its Pacific coastal plains, central Andes mountains, and in the east, its vast forested Amazonian lands. It is in part of this region, named after the Yasuni river, that some of the world’s greatest biodiversity exists, where a single hectare of forest contains as many species as the entire continent of North America. This is the “green gold” in which indigenous people pursue their lives, which many in Ecuador are fighting to preserve.

Preserve against what? Against the “black gold” – one billion barrels of oil – that lies under the green gold of nature. Ecuador gets 60% of its exports earnings from oil, and the oil companies – including PetroCanada, Texaco, and Shell – fight to defend their interests using repression, threats, private armies, even death.

The conflict over oil in the region is long and painful, but a new proposal has created a whole new game. The government of Ecuador, led by Rafael Correa since November 2006 - who told the US government it could continue to occupy a military base in Ecuador if

Ecuador could open a military base in Miami - has announced that if the international community will pay it \$350 million a year for ten years (half the value of the oil) to create a legacy fund which would be used to finance sustainable development and renewable energy, they would leave the oil underground indefinitely.



The Ecuadorian government is not of one mind, and there are those who think the black gold more important than the green. The deadline for finding the money has been put back twice (it is currently December 2008), and the pressure – and excitement – is building. The staff of New Internationalist magazine, who produced a special issue on the Yasuni and rushed the book *Yasuni Green Gold* into publication, have started a campaign for the Yasuni which they hope everyone will join. Ana Rivas, mayor of the local government, says “If we achieve this, not only will we conserve an enormously diverse area, home to the Tagaeri and the Taromenane people, but we will also become a universal symbol that a new world is possible.” Please get engaged. See [www.newint.org/yasuni](http://www.newint.org/yasuni) and [www.yasuni greengold.org](http://www.yasuni greengold.org).

PS: One billion barrels of oil is 11 days global supply. Would we sacrifice all this green treasure for just eleven more days of global bingeing?

PS 2: Exxon Mobil gathers \$44 billion in profit a year: that’s \$350 million every 3 days.

PS 3: Norway’s Oil Legacy fund contains \$363 billion.



Tagaeri mother and child

#### ONTARIO’S BOREAL FOREST

Just imagine, if Oregon was to announce the protection of almost the entire state. And yet, in terms of land protected, this has just been achieved in northern Ontario, where the Ontario government has announced plans to protect 227,000 sq. km. of Boreal forest from all industry. The land falls within the traditional territory of 36 First Nations communities, who must provide community support for any future forestry or mining. The success follows a four-year campaign in which the US-based Rainforest Action Network and its supporters worked closely with the First Nations.

#### ETHICAL INVESTING

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#### COWICHAN CARBON BUSTERS

A small group is going to be meeting in the Cowichan Valley for ten weeks, starting September 10<sup>th</sup>, to pioneer a 10-week course in personal and household carbon reduction that I have written for my new book. There may be room for 2 or 3 more people – if you’re interested, call Peter Nix at 250-748-7954.

#### ACTION OF THE MONTH ECONEWS

I’ve never done this before. There are new people and new students arriving in Victoria all the time who do not know that EcoNews exists. Will you tell five friends about EcoNews? I can mail you extra copies if you ask – just call me at 250-881-1304. Thankyou!!