

ECONEWS #200

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.

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By email: www.earthfuture.com/econews

THE ECO-PERSONALS

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* **Wanted:** The Green Party of Canada's Victoria organization is seeking board members with experience in event planning and/or fundraising. Please send your resumé to jared.giesbrecht@greenparty.ca

* **Wanted:** directors or volunteers to help the Vancouver Island Vegetarian Association (VIVA), dedicated to education, community events and potlucks. www.islandveg.com/viva

ECONEWS ISSUE #200

Yea, 200th issue! But we'll save the celebrations until October 2011, which will be EcoNews' 20th birthday. In the meantime, I need help in telling new people about EcoNews and giving copies to eco-minded friends. If you'd like 5 copies, just ask. 881-1304.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

In November, I was invited to give a TEDx lecture in Vancouver, and chose this as my theme. The seven wonders that are possible, if we put our minds to it, are: (1) a shift to 100% renewable energy; (2) the greening of the economy

so that all market decisions reflect Nature's needs; (3) the end of warfare; (4) the end of poverty; (5) the end of cruelty to animals; (6) the establishment of democratic global governance; (7) the emergence of a globally unified spirituality. To watch the short 15' video, see <http://bit.ly/dauncey>

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FLATHEAD VICTORY

Way to go! As a result of persistent campaigning by the Sierra Club of BC, Wildsight and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and by your letter-writing, the BC government has announced a ban on mining and oil and gas development in the amazing, Flathead River Valley, in the south-east corner of BC. This is a great first step towards permanent protection of the Flathead as a National Park and Wildlife Management Area. On Thur March 25th there's Sierra Club evening in Victoria to celebrate, and learn what's needed next. See Green Diary.

CARROTMOBING

You know about Facebook and Twitter - now there's Carrotmobbing! This is a new approach to activism whereby people vote on-line in a contest in which businesses pledge to a proportion of their revenue to going green. The winner gets "carrot-mobbed", meaning we all descend on the business that day, harnessing our buying power to support green change. UVic's Commerce Sustainability Club has just run such a contest, and the winner is the family-run Belgian waffle-makers Wannawafel in Market Square (just off Johnson), whose owners Ranaat and Krista have pledged to invest 100% of their revenues on **Friday March 12th** in environmental improvements under the guidance of Smallfeet Inc (www.smallfeet.ca). So make that a date to enjoy their waffles, and help them go green! See www.victoria.carrotmob.org

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Seattle has declared 2010 The Year of Urban Agriculture, aiming to make locally-grown produce affordable and available to as many Seattle residents as possible, while supporting local

farmers. Seattle has always been a leader on this. Their 65 P-Patch Community Gardens provide space for 2,000 urban gardeners, and the city's Comprehensive Plan calls for a community garden for every 2,000 households living within urban villages. In 2008, a Parks and Green Spaces Levy, supported by 59% of Seattle voters, included \$2 million for new community gardens during 2009-2012, managed by the Department of Neighborhoods P-Patch Program. As part of its Year of Urban Agriculture, Seattle will allow backyard farmers more flexibility in what they can grow and raise on urban property (including chickens and goats), and there's a old new program to create ten urban farms inside Seattle city limits. Residents are already allowed to plant food in the grass boulevard strips in front of their homes. For Victoria, Vancouver and other municipalities that want to do more here, there's food for thought here! www.seattle.gov/urbanagriculture

SUSTAINABLE STORMWATER

Before the white folks came along, rainfall dispersed naturally, filtered through the forests, fields and soil. When we built streets and houses, we channeled it away into pipes, and assumed we'd done a smart thing. Not so, however, as now we're realizing. The high velocity of the stormwater that comes out of the pipes has helped to destroy our once-abundant salmon streams; the contaminants from people dumping nasty substances down the drain and from road run-off (including toxic metals, oils, PCBs, solvents, pesticides, herbicides and leaded paint chips) have caused most of the region's bountiful shellfish beds to be closed to harvest; and the toxic run-off is the chief source of PCB contamination in orca whales. That's the price we pay for our old-fashioned 19th century system.

So what would sustainable stormwater look like? That's what students and staff at UVic's Environmental Law Centre (ELC) have been working on with their report *Re-inventing Rainwater Management: Protecting Health and Restoring Nature in the Capital Region*. (<http://bit.ly/cfupX9>). Low Impact Development techniques aim to mimic the natural water cycle, restoring the function of trees, soil and open space, enabling the water to infiltrate down slowly through the soil to be released

into the watershed. Such methods are also often cheaper. The ELC team has a raft of recommendations, including creating a CRD Rainwater Commission that would undertake an integrated watershed management approach. We have to think regionally for this.

If we do what's needed, our children will be able to enjoy the magic of salmon in our urban streams, harvest local shellfish, and still wonder at the orca whales. ELC is hosting a public meeting on this at UVic on Thur March 4th, (see Green Diary) to get things happening. To learn about all their other great work, see www.elc.uvic.ca

TRANSITION TOWNS

The Transition Towns movement is getting a hold in Victoria, with working groups set up to explore ways in which the Victoria region can increase our community self-reliance, and to craft an organized transition out of fossil fuels. For those who are new to this, there's a public meeting on March 18th (see Green Diary). For wider information about their meetings, see <http://transitionvictoria.wordpress.com> and <http://transitionvictoria.ning.com>

MADRONA FARM

The saga continues. Of the \$2.5 million asking price to save Madrona Farm, just \$250,000 remains to be raised - but by March 15th! So please, if you can contribute, please do so. See madronafarm.com + bit.ly/madronafarm

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www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/Seeds_Catalogue.htm

FAIR TRADE & CONFLICT

Fair Trade, whereby the producers in the developing world receive a fair price for their food or crafts and invest some of the proceeds in community schools and local development - has a far higher profile in the UK than it does in Canada. They have just finished Fair Trade Fortnight - The Big Swap", when people all over Britain were encouraged to switch to fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts, sugar, cotton and cosmetics. Britain's annual Fair Trade sales grew by 12% to £799 million in 2009, even in the depth of the recession, and many major retail players are actively selling Fair Trade products.

One fascinating result shows the value of fair trade in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia and the Congo, where the justice-based economic model brings decent prices which can be used to improve living conditions and divert young men away from involvement in militias. Fair trade also builds trust-based structures such as cooperatives, which help restore social cohesiveness and stability in areas where fear, anger and corruption often dominate.

In Afghanistan, Britain is importing 70 tonnes of fair trade raisins a year from the Shomali Plains north of Kabul, where local traders have almost no trust of each other. The potential of fair trade as a way to build peace is enormous - the European market imports 600,000 tonnes of raisins a year, and many more could come from Afghanistan.

In Palestine, the profits from fair trade certified olive oil have funded scholarships for farmers' children and supported the development of women's cooperatives which produce other fair trade goods - all in the face of huge difficulties caused by the Israeli trade blockade and closed borders. Just think how much more could happen without the blockade, which has killed off the fair trade in crafts from Atfaluna, a deaf people's charity in Gaza.

It just goes to show: there are so many ways to make this world a better place, and we need not despair until we have exhausted them all. www.transfair.ca

WILD SALMON

Alexandra Morton has been urging the government for years to get farmed salmon out of the wild salmon's waters, because of the harm that the sea-lice on the farmed salmon cause to wild salmon as they migrate past the fish farms. 90% of BC's fish farms are owned by Norwegian companies, and Norway's former Attorney General, Georg Fredrik Rieber-Mohn, has just written an urgent warning to BC based on Norway's failure to protect their wild salmon from the very same threat. Norwegian scientists have found nearly 100 cases of sea-lice that are immune to chemical treatments, and as a result, there are calls in Norway for drastic cutbacks to salmon farming. We urgently need to heed his warning before it is too late for us here in BC. For action, go to

www.adopt-a-fry.org and
alexandramorton.typepad.com

ACTIONS OF THE MONTH

This is where we combine our efforts.
Together we can make a difference.

(1) THE GRIZZLY BEARS

More than 11,000 grizzlies have been killed across BC since 1975 - and most by trophy hunters, for the joy of the kill. The hunting season starts again in April, and now, surely, is the time to end it. People all over the world want it to end.

Action: Write to the Premier and to Barry Penner, Minister of Environment, urging them to stop this annual tragedy.

* Rt Hon Gordon Campbell, Parliament Bldgs, Victoria V8V 1X4 250-387-1715
Gordon.Campbell.MLA@leg.bc.ca

* Hon. Barry Penner, PO Box 9047 Stn Prov Gov Victoria V8W 9E2, 250-387-1187
Barry.Penner@gov.bc.ca



(2) THE POLAR BEARS

On March 13-15th, the global summit on Endangered Species (CITES) takes place in Qatar, and the US wants to prevent polar bear body parts from being sold internationally, which would remove much of the reason for killing these wonderful creatures, without impacting the Inuit's subsistence hunt. Canada's Environment Minister Jim Prentice has said that he intends to oppose this, even though the polar bears are so threatened by the melting Arctic.

Action: Write Rt Hon. Stephen Harper, PM, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6 pm@pm.gc.ca

and to Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of Environment (same address) 613-992-4275
Jim.Prentice@ec.gc.ca

