

ENVIRONMENTALITY

A topical index of environmental news, research, speculation, and invective



March 15, 2008

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Biodiversity

Future 'Battlegrounds' for Conservation

Biologists have developed a series of global maps that show where projected habitat loss and climate change are expected to drive the need for future reserves to prevent biodiversity loss. These future battlegrounds differ widely from those of the past.

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Invasive Species Can Produce Biodiv Gains

When exotic species invade new territory, they often present a major threat to the other plants and animals living there—that much is clear. But researchers now show that, in addition to their destructive tendencies, invasive species can also have a surprisingly “creative” side and can actually do more ecological good than harm in certain cases.

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Integration of Development and Conservation Consistent with Ecosystem Based Management

The preservation of coastal ecosystem services such as clean water, storm buffers or fisheries protection does not have to be an all-or-nothing approach, a new study indicates, and a better understanding of how ecosystems actually respond to protection efforts in a “nonlinear” fashion could help lead the way out of environmental-versus-economic gridlock.

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New Predator-Based Ecosystem Paradigm

Predators have considerably more influence than plants over how an ecosystem functions, according to a recent study published in Science.

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Species Watch

[Sea Lions](#) Massacred in Galapagos

Scientists Find [Hibernating Fish](#) In Antarctic

Kiribati's [Phoenix Islands](#) to be World's Largest Protected Area

[Great Apes](#) Threatened by Germs Carried by Eco-Tourists

Invasive [Giant Pythons](#) Menace America

[Pet Hamsters](#) Banned in Vietnam

Hawaii Seeks to Import Wasps to [Control Invasive Pests](#)

[New Monkey](#) Species Found in Remote Amazon

Norway Keeps [Whaling Quota](#), Draws Ire

[Starfish](#) Die Off in Britain

Trade in [Tiger Parts](#) Unrelenting in Sumatra

[Cougars](#) Under Threat in US Northwest

5000 Mile [Tiger](#) Corridor Planned Bhutan to Burma

[King Penguin](#) Faces Extinction Due to Climate Change

Yellowstone's [Rabbits](#) Have Vanished

Business Corporations and Finance

Business Contradictions on Climate Change

A recent survey of executive opinions on climate change found that the majority regard it as a strategically important issue - but more than a third said it is seldom or never considered when actually developing strategy.

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Greenwashing in China: This photo, named "Qinghai-Tibet railway opening, green passageway for wild animals", was named among the 10 most impressive news photos of 2006 at an annual event sponsored by Chinese Central Television and was intended to prove the environmental friendliness of a new high speed train. Photographer Liu Weiqiang later admitted he faked the shot that appears to show Tibetan antelopes calmly crossing near a bridge on the Qinghai-Tibet railway as a train passes. (Credit: [China.com](#))

Nutrition, Health, and Wealth, cont'd

Thousands of Languages Face Extinction

The International Year of Languages kicked off recently with a warning from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that more than half the world's 6,700 spoken languages are threatened with extinction and every two weeks on average one language disappears somewhere around the world.

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EU Asks U.S. to Re-examine Food Aid Rules: "Not Good Policy"

The U.S. Congress should take a hard look at laws governing purchase of food aid, which can aggravate problems for vulnerable countries, the European Union's ambassador in Washington said.

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Disease Watch

[Drug-Resistant TB](#) Rates Soar in Former Soviet Regions

Paraguay Confirms 7 [Yellow Fever](#) Deaths

[Emerging Infectious Diseases](#) 'Hotspot' Predicted

US Pledges \$350M to WHO For 7 [Neglected Tropical Diseases](#)

[Malaria Can Be Beaten](#) In Many Places, Map Shows

Combo Vaccine Protects Monkeys From [Ebola and Marburg](#) Viruses

[Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis](#) on the Rise, UN Health Agency Says

Novartis Opens Non-Profit [Neglected Diseases Institute](#)

[Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase](#) Killing People in Denmark

Shrinking Frog Secretions May Treat [Type II Diabetes](#)

New and/or Noteworthy Media

Rivers and Tides

African Development Bank to Fund Congo Forest

The African Development Bank Group is planning to invest US \$814 million in biodiversity conservation and natural resources management in Central Africa's Congo Basin, the group's president announced.

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Merrill Lynch: Turning Trees into Money

The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a consortium of 315 top institutional investors assessing industries about their CO2 emissions, announced Sunday a new partnership to extend its global initiative to companies and suppliers.

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Alstom and Partners to Capture CO2

Alstom, together with its US partners the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and We Energies, launched a pilot project based in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, that uses chilled ammonia to capture carbon dioxide (CO2) from coal-fueled power plants.

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Climate

EPA Reports Economic Analysis of Climate Security Act (Lieberman-Warner)

This congressionally mandated study finds virtually no difference in US economic growth through 2030 if a carbon cap is imposed as laid out in the bill (S. 2191 of 2007)

[>Report \(pdf\)](#) [>Related Blogs](#)

Tipping Elements in the Earth's Climate System

A comprehensive study of climate tipping elements (a.k.a. points) creates a global risk and severity prioritized list for purposes of mitigation and adaptation policy formulation.

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Climate Influence on Deep Sea Populations

Scientists describe a mechanism of interaction across ecosystems showing how a climate-driven phenomenon originated in shelf environments controls the biological processes of a deep-sea living resource.

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Warming May Cause Arctic Tundra to Burn

Research from ancient sediment cores indicates that a warming climate could make the world's arctic tundra far more susceptible to fires than previously thought. The findings are important given the potential for tundra fires to release organic carbon – which could add significantly to the amount of greenhouse gases already blamed for global warming.

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Sequestration, Mitigation, and Treaty Watch

[Compost](#) Can Turn Agri-Soils Into Carbon Sink

Tenaska Proposes First [CO2 Storage Coal Plant](#)

[MIT Expert](#): How to Toughen Up Environmental Treaties

Extraordinary [Frameworks](#) for CO2 Capture

[Proposal](#) for Seabed CO2 Storage

New Material for Capturing CO2 From [Smokestacks](#)

[US Ready](#) for 'Binding' Reductions of Greenhouse Gases: Official

Method for Reducing [Bovine Methane](#)

[Automotive Tailpipe](#) Carbon Capture

Energy and Transportation

Biofuel Blending Is Often Inaccurate

When testing fuels listed as 20 percent biodiesel (commonly known as B20), study finds that the actual percentage of biofuel

Documentary Film

During the past quarter-century, Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy's mastery of a medium he largely pioneered has earned him worldwide recognition. With objects found in nature - rocks, twigs, icicles, grass - Goldsworthy constructs imaginative outdoor sculptures ranging from massive stone towers to delicate chains of leaves floating on a stream. Thomas Riedelsheimer's enthralling documentary profile captures Goldsworthy's painstaking creative process and presents an invaluable visual record of his art, much of which is extremely short-lived.

[>DVD](#)

Everyday Environmentalist

Web Site

The Nature Conservancy offers this site where scientists share their tips for green living.

[>Site](#)

The Forest for the Trees

Film

When, in 1990, the car of Earth First! leader Judi Bari was bombed and she was swiftly arrested on suspicions of being a terrorist, environmentalist activists suspected a government conspiracy to discredit Bari and her organization. Bari sued the FBI, and in 2002 - five years after her untimely death - the case came to court. Documentary filmmaker Bernadine Mellis presents an intimate and inspiring account of the preparation and trial, in which Bari was represented by veteran civil rights lawyer Dennis Cunningham, who is also Mellis's father.

[>DVD](#)

Emotionally Durable Design

Book

This book is a call to arms for professionals, students, and academic creatives; proposing the emergence of a new genre of sustainable design that reduces consumption and waste by increasing the durability of relationships established between users and products. Chapman pioneers a radical design about-face to reduce the impact of modern consumption without compromising commercial or creative edge.

[>Book](#)

Science and Policy Frontiers

Top Engineering Challenges For Coming Decades

The National Academy of Engineering throws down the gauntlet to future researchers in four broad areas of human concern: sustainability, health, vulnerability, and joy of living. Fourteen specific goals are described on the Academy site.

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Federal Nanotech Risk Research Still Comes Up Short

An improved but still flawed government-wide plan for nanotechnology risk research is the result of a broken system. US , Federally-funded studies essential to managing possible risks from this cutting-edge technology should be guided by a top-down strategy tied to projected commercialization, expected human and environmental exposures, and the regulatory decision-making process.

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Physicists Descry Urgent Need for Nuclear Detectives

Scientists have found that environmental exposure to nutritional, chemical and physical factors can alter the epigenome. Literally meaning "above the genome," the epigenome refers to differences in gene expression that are inherited without changing the sequence of DNA. With the identification of epigenetically unstable locations in the human genome, it will be possible to screen individuals at an early age for epigenetically susceptible diseases, allowing for closer monitoring and more frequent follow-up.

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ranged from as little as 10 percent to as much as 74 percent. Only 10 percent of all the samples tested met the specifications for biofuel blends.

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Global Wind Power Capacity Reaches 100,000MW

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Canadians Wonder Whether New US Energy Bill Disallows Oil-Sands Exports to US

A clause in the recently passed U.S. energy bill could be interpreted to prevent the U.S. from sourcing fuel from Canada's oil sands. Section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act prohibits the U.S. government from purchasing alternative fuels with higher lifecycle greenhouse-gas emissions than conventional petroleum. It's a descriptor that seems to fit oil sands, which have traditionally been classified as an alternative fuel and can produce up to five times more carbon emissions than conventional oil production.

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Is Nuclear for Fossil a Viable Option?

Nuclear energy production must increase by more than 10% each year from 2010 to 2050 to meet all future energy demands and replace fossil fuels, but this is an unsustainable prospect. According to a new report, such a large growth rate will require a major improvement in nuclear power efficiency otherwise each new power plant will simply cannibalize the energy produced by earlier nuclear power plants.

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Solar Watch

More Efficient [Parabolic Trough](#) Solar Collectors

[Organic Polymer](#) Solar Cell Created

Solar Cells with [60% Efficiency?](#)

[Nano Flakes](#) Could Revolutionize Solar Cells

World Record for [Solar-to-Grid Conversion Efficiency](#): 31.25%

[V-Shaped](#) Cells For Better Efficiency

Look at Pollution from [Solar Cell Manufacture](#)

[Inflatable Concentrators](#) Below Cost of Conventional Power

Forests and Agriculture

World Fertilizer Prices Surge 200% in 2007

This, as farmers sought to maximize corn production for ethanol, according to the International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development (IFDC). Poor African farmers were hardest hit by the increase. Nevertheless, enough fertilizer will be produced in the next five years to cover world demand and support higher levels of food and biofuel production, according to a report released today by the United Nations agricultural agency.

[>Story A , B](#) [>Related Blogs](#)

New Carbon Calculator Aims To Conserve Forests

Conservation International's calculator is a quick and easy way to calculate carbon footprints, learn about ways to reduce emissions, and contribute to one of the least addressed and most important ways to combat climate change -- protecting existing tropical forests.

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Land Cover Change 2002–2005 in Borneo and the Role of Fire Derived from MODIS Imagery

Satellite tools provide an invaluable insight into global forest conditions. Here, data from MODIS underlines that fire is the major driver for forest degradation and deforestation.

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20-Year Study of Warming on Tropical Tree Communities Upsets Conventional View

These new results do not support the hypothesis that fast-

Top Water Utilities to Study Climate Change

Eight of the top U.S. water utilities are joining forces to study rising sea levels, droughts and other effects of global warming are taking a toll on supplies of drinking water.

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Research and Policy Watch

[Aerial Identification](#) of Forest Tree Species Using Spectroscopy

Testing Oral [Contraceptives for Animals](#)

The [Downside](#) of Good Ideas

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H and O Isotope Ratios in Human Hair [Related to Geography](#)

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Hypertension and Exposure to [Noise Near Airports](#)

[Valerolactone](#)—Sustainable Liquid for Energy and Chemicals

Waste

US-DOE Falls Behind In Nuclear Cleanups

Cleanup of nuclear weapons sites is behind schedule and over budget, an audit shows, but the Department of Energy still cuts the program.

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Sewage-Based Fertilizer Safety Doubted

Sewage sludge is widely processed into an agricultural fertilizer product. Recent studies have shown that this sludge fertilizer often contains harmful sewage residues. Last week, a federal judge ordered the Agriculture Department to compensate a farmer whose land was poisoned by sludge from a waste treatment plant. The farmer's cows had died by the hundreds.

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NYC Council Approves E-Waste Bill, Mayor Opposed

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Ancient Lebanese City Chokes Under Rubbish Dump

"Sidon's mountain" bears no resemblance to the green mountains of Lebanon. It is rather an immense landfill that dumps its trash into the Mediterranean, polluting the coast of the ancient Phoenician port city.

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Chemicals and New Materials Watch

US-EPA [Tightens Smog Standard](#); Allows [Cost-Benefit](#) for Standards

Turtle Studies Suggest Health Risks From [PFCs](#)

[Self-Repairing Rubber](#) Created

Japanese Firm Creates [Fake Soil](#) For A Greener City

Clothes That [Clean Themselves](#)

Designer Organic Removes [Chlorine and Fluorine](#) in Solution

[Nacre Mimicking](#) Nanocomposite is Strong, Stretchy, and Light

New Findings on [Emerging Contaminants](#)

Health Debate Over Next Generation [Synthetic Turfs](#)

U.S. [Response to REACH](#) So Far

Urinary Concentrations of [Triclosan](#) in US Population: 2003–2004

[Polymer Nanocomposites](#) Inspired by Sea Cucumber Dermis

Rosemary Goes A Long Way In Reducing [Acrylamide](#) In Food

[Arsenic](#) in Rice Milk Exceeds EU and US Drinking Water Standards

Waters and Aquaculture

Grand Canyon Flooded to Improve Ecosystem

U.S. officials released a flood into the Grand Canyon to try to undo damage caused by the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam in the 1960s.

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growing species are consistently increasing in dominance in tropical tree communities experiencing warming conditions.

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Agriculture and GM Watch

[Qatar](#) Plans Law to Check Entry of GM Products

UN: [Virulent Wheat Fungus](#) Spreads to Iran, Threatens Asia

[Lowdown](#) on Dirt: It's Disappearing

Scientists Unveil '[Supercarrot](#)'

[Uganda](#): GMO Cotton Trials Approved

Benefits [Outdo Risks](#) From Genetically Modified Plants

EU Lawyers Take [Action Against Poland](#) Over GMO Ban

Scientists Use Isotopic Discrimination to [Detect Syn-Fertilizers](#)

[Mitigation](#) Potential and Costs for Global Agricultural GHGs

Fossils Show [Insect Assaults on Foliage](#) Increase With Warming

[Rediscovering](#) the Forgotten Crops

Development of [Transgenic Food](#) Staples Slow: World Bank

Is [Transgenic Cotton](#) More Profitable?

'No Clone' [Hard to Enforce](#) in Food Supply

Germany: Green Light to '[GM Free](#)' Foods Label

[Consequences of GM](#) Crop Contamination 'Are Set to Worsen'

Nutrition, Health, and Wealth

Life Expectancy Rises for the Educated While Less-Educated Reap No Benefit

It's no secret that over the last few decades, life expectancy in the United States has been rising. However, recent data shows that not everyone has benefited from this encouraging trend. New findings from Harvard Medical School and Harvard University demonstrate that individuals with more than 12 years of education have significantly longer life expectancy than those who never went beyond high school.

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We Are Losing the Battle to Feed the World: UN

The United Nations warned that it no longer has enough money to keep global malnutrition at bay this year in the face of a dramatic upward surge in world commodity prices, which have created a "new face of hunger".

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Ocean Dead-Zones May Be Linked To Global Warming

Levels of oxygen in the summertime around the Oregon coast suddenly become much lower than levels in the previous year, says eminent marine biologist Jane Lubchenco. "And 2006 broke all records, with parts of the shallow shelf actually becoming anoxic, meaning that they lacked oxygen altogether. We've never seen that before." These dead-zones however are not brought on by excessive nitrogen loads as is usually the case.

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EPA Blocks Project Pumping Mississippi Wetlands Dry for Agriculture

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is threatening to veto a \$220 million Army Corps of Engineers flood-control project in the Mississippi Delta known as Yazoo Pump that environmentalists have long opposed for its adverse impact on wildlife and wetlands.

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Drain on the Mediterranean: Rising Water Usage

In a dramatic illustration of a broader regional crisis, a Turkish lake three times the size of Washington, D.C., has dried up in the past 15 years.

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Aquaculture and Fisheries Watch

Unexpected Results of Pesticides on [Salmon Brain](#)

Learning From [Cod Collapse](#) to Save Tuna

New Research Claims Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Stable [Over 50 Years](#)

Global Trade In [Tiger Shrimp](#) Threatens Environment

[Krill](#) Discovered Living in the Antarctic Abyss

Officials Likely to Close [Pacific Salmon Fishery](#) Oregon to Mexico

Iceland Lifts [Capelin](#) Ban A Week After Imposing It

[Beluga Sturgeon](#) Threatened, Yet Caviar Quotas Unchanged

Researchers Find Aquaculture Promise in [Black Sea Bass](#)

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Author of [GEOCIDE: Placating Humanity's Environmental Demons](#)

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