



SEALOEarth
Serene Environment And Life On Earth

A world in which all people participate in the stewardship of planet Earth.

NEWSLETTER

Earth Day 2016

“Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.”

~ John F. Kennedy

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We hope that you will enjoy reading this newsletter!



Celebration of Earth

Westford, Massachusetts, USA

Earth Day was celebrated at the J V Fletcher library in Westford, Massachusetts on Saturday, April 30th 2016.

Anthony Cammaleri and Allison Bergeron sang beautiful songs, including an original song written by Anthony. Ms. Lynn Tyndall was the master of ceremony and she also led an activity on “Earth Day Ceremony”. Benjamin Moore spoke on Bee Keeping and showed the bee keeping gear and tools. Eagle Scout Sai Balabhadraputruni gave a presentation on “GPS Mapping of Westford Trails”.

The Keynote Speaker was Ms. Ellen Rainville, Director, JV Fletcher Library, Westford, who was inducted into the Massachusetts Library Association Hall of Fame. She addressed the audience about Westford and its history in the context of outstanding contributions made by its residents over the decades. Ms. Rainville also gave away the certificates.

Ms. Shobha Hiremath announced the winners of the Global Essay Contest. Elizabeth Deloia read her essay via video and the essay written by Martin Holmes of New Zealand was read by Sadhika Hiremath.

To heighten the awareness of the bees dying worldwide, a packet of seeds of flowers were given away to all the people who attended the celebration.

Global Environmental Distinction 2016

Inspiring environmental projects related to fostering biodiversity, strengthening ecosystems, and establishing sustainable practices were recognized.

Bee Keeping

Benjamin Moore (USA)

GPS Mapping of Westford Trails

Sai Balabhadraputruni (USA)



Global Essay Contest

Around the World

In January 2016 alone, SEALOEarth’s global reach included countries such as, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Peru, South America, Tanzania, Ukraine, Singapore, Nigeria, Norway, United Kingdom, Kenya, Indonesia, India, and United States among others.

We received wonderful essays from four countries across three continents. The essays were scored by our international panel of judges. We were disappointed that we did not receive any entries in the Youth category this year. We encourage very young writers to follow the simple description and make use of the resources made available to get started.

We are delighted to announce that we have introduced a Non-competitive category for ages 26 and above, so that no one is left out. The new prompt for our next year’s Global Essay Contest 2017 has been posted online and we look forward to receiving inspiring essays from around the world in all categories.

Winners of the Global Essay Contest 2016

"How do we ensure a prosperous future for our planet Earth within the safe operating space of its planetary boundaries and ecosystems?"

Juniors (ages 13-17)

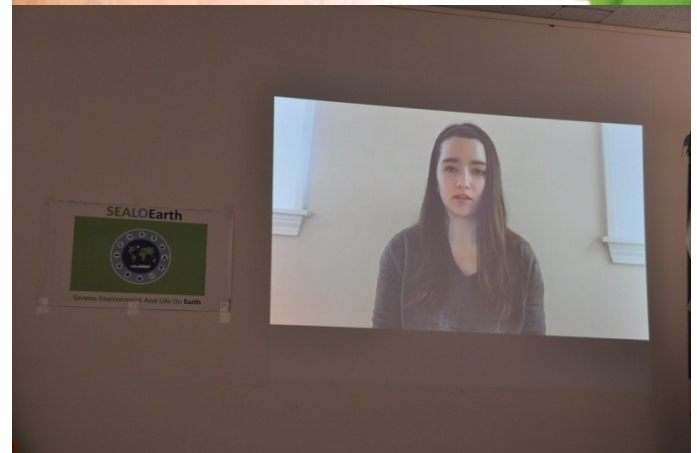
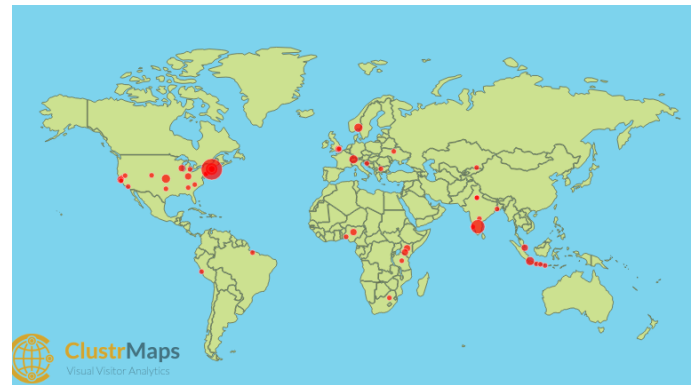
- Zachary Hillman (USA) 1st
- Elizabeth Deloia (USA) 2nd

Seniors (ages 18-25)

- Martin Holmes (New Zealand) 1st
- Nur Shafiqah Binti Mohd Safuan (Malaysia) 2nd

Honorable Mention

- Richa Gupta (India)
- Kaylar Fullington (USA)



CARE: Cleanup And Recycle Events

San Diego, California Westford, Massachusetts

The cleanup events were during April 16-24, 2016. Volunteers in various towns cleaned up public places such as beaches, parks, sports fields and nature trails.

In San Diego, California, volunteers cleaned the Chiquarita Creek Trail with family and friends. Thanks to Ms. Mandira Sudame for taking the lead, she believes that “the Earth Day should be celebrated every day”.

In Westford, Massachusetts, a group of volunteers cleaned up Edwards Beach and Forge Pond Beach. Three parents who had brought their children to the playground and the beach appreciated the cleanup work and said “Thank you for doing this for us”.

On the beaches, people party and have fun with “String Spray”. The party planning should include post party cleanup. At the Forge Pond Beach, there was this “string” found everywhere near the picnic area because someone did not care to clean up the trash after the party. It is hard to clean up these things because the “strings” break up into pieces. Using of this product should be avoided in parks and on beaches.



Source: Google images.

Nature in your Neighborhood

Westford, Massachusetts



Spring in New England is a wonderful time of the year. Taking a walk in a quiet trail, being with nature and breathing fresh air is a treat and a gift for one's eyes, ears, and soul.

In Westford, Massachusetts, one must visit Nashoba Pond and Russell Bird Sanctuary/Stone Arch Bridge. They are home to birds such as Red-winged Blackbirds, Baltimore Oriole, King Bird, White-throated Sparrow, and Geese among other birds.

We would love to see pictures and hear about nature in your neighborhood!



Bee Keeping



Benjamin Moore (17) Massachusetts, USA

Ben Moore, a junior at Westford Academy, was happy to share his experience as a hobbyist beekeeper. Ben has always been interested in producing his own food. When he was 5, he helped his dad make maple syrup. At 10, he began vegetable gardening and had his own farm stand. Bee keeping is another extension of the “natural produce” you can easily have at home. When Ben would visit his aunt in Virginia, she would drive him out to the honeybee’s, and show him the different products that bee’s produce. As Ben learned more, he discovered that honeybees are relatively easy to take care of, and have a high reward (delicious honey, and your garden vegetables do much better when the plants are pollinated by honeybees).

It is said that 70 of the top 100 food crops are pollinated by honeybees, which are no longer able to survive without the help of beekeepers. Each bee can visit up to 2,000 flowers a day and up to 80,000 flowers in one bee’s life. With bees, not only do your own plants get pollinated, but all your neighbors within a mile radius get the benefit too! And the beekeeper gets the honey.

There are local organizations to help people start beekeeping. The Middlesex County Bee Association meets once a month in Carlisle, and is a great way to get introduced, and hear from other local beekeepers (and there are lots of

them!) The head of the organization also teaches classes locally to help people get started. The classes help you learn about the equipment you need, how to manage the bees, and how best to keep your bees healthy.

Ben began beekeeping over a year ago, starting with just 2 hives. The first year was challenging, because the bees don’t necessarily do what you want them to do, so opening the hive was like detective work to figure out what was happening inside. But the bees leave clues. Are they overcrowded? Is the queen laying eggs? Do you have brood at different stages of development? By looking for these signs, you can decide what steps to take. But, the reward from his first year was about 18 pounds of honey, despite losing one hive in late summer. This spring, the surviving hive was going strong, and Ben has added two new hives to begin building out his hobby.

Ben brought some beekeeping equipment and photos to introduce everyone to the world of beekeeping.



GPS Mapping of the Westford Trails



Sai Balabhadraputruni (16)
Massachusetts, USA

The purpose of my Eagle project was to lead small groups of community volunteers through the process of providing GPS coordinates as well as other data requested by the Conservation Trust, Conservation Commission, Westford Trail Stewards, Westford Police, Fire, GIS and Recreation Departments for the conservation trail system in Westford. This contributed towards the forest & wildlife management, safety, conservation and enjoyment of our community conservation properties and provided accurate data for the GIS Department database.

The town of Westford currently has hand drawn maps in a trail book which covers 50 miles of 27 trails. The Westford Engineering Dept. wanted to create a trail piece for their data base, allowing them to create and include GPS accurate maps of the trails throughout the town.

The plan was to collect the electronic GPS data of the trails points on the GPS units; and then create a spread sheet compatible with their software, (with the same data) which they can then add to their current data base. Coordinates were found for trail heads, trail junctions, bridges, and possible sightings of the unexpected such as invasive species or obstructions for future intervention. Additionally, data on a trail's ATV accessibility in cases of emergency were also found. The simultaneous use of 2 GPS units (one for the trail

itself & one for the data points) which are compatible with the town's Engineering Dept.'s system, database software also allowed the trails themselves to be recorded and transferred directly from the GPS unit, into the town data base system.

Other data like finding problematic areas such as invasive species and impassable areas on the trails might also be necessary based on the needs of the various beneficiaries. The data given to the GIS database has helped create more accurate maps for the town and other community organizations. Also, we hope the data on ATV accessibility will prove to be beneficial to our town's fire and police departments.



A Vital Transformation



Elizabeth Deloia (17)
Massachusetts, USA

“Destroying rainforest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal” (Wilson). In burning a Renaissance painting, a valued piece of history is destroyed forever, and only one small inconsequential meal is received in return. In a similarly selfish way, the destruction of rainforests for economic gain, destroys a natural wonder keeping Earth in balance, and in return gives us an advancement, that in the long run will be meaningless. Planet Earth is perishing because of us. We cannot keep sitting around waiting for a change that will never come. We are the reason Mother Earth is crumbling, and we must be the reason for her revival. We need a global change and fast. It is time to stop dwelling on the future we think is inevitable, and believe that we can turn it around. We need a world that our grandchildren, great grand-children and many generations after, can prosper and thrive in, not suffer until they die in. In his ted talk, Johan Rockström, proves that we must stay within certain planetary boundaries to truly save our planet. We can ensure a prosperous future for our Earth and stay in these boundaries, if we embrace transcendentalist ideas and work together to change the world.



Nonconformity is the first transcendentalist step to a prosperous future. We can each start small, and work our way up. We must stop conforming to whatever is socially acceptable. Stop buying what everyone else has, be it technology, cars, or anything else, just to be cool. We should be content with what we have, and this will begin to abate conformity. Even if a student, young or old, makes an effort to stop following trends, eventually when enough people do it, the trends will disappear. The conformists in the world are all the people who continue to watch our beloved planet disintegrate until there is nothing left. We need nonconformists who can break away from everyone else and better our planet. One can begin as simple as cutting down the amount of meat they consume. When everyone else is ordering meat, be a nonconformist and order something else. This will spark others to do the same, and if enough people do it, it will slow the rate of biodiversity loss. Cutting down on the amount of energy one uses, and encouraging others to do the same, will also begin to better our environment. The average person in the United States uses about 149 million BTU per year just on transportation; this is the equivalent of the energy in 165 thousand sticks of dynamite (“How Much Energy Do You Use?”). Even more energy goes towards electricity, both causing there to be an abundance of nitrogen in the air and drastic climate change. Simply cutting down on the energy one consumes can be a big help to our planet while staying within its boundaries.

A next step we must take in saving our planet and becoming a transcendentalist is becoming self-reliant. We need to stop relying on automobiles to get us from point A to point B. Setting a distance in which something can be for one to ride their bike to, or even walk to, will be a tremendous help. We must begin to set goals, and keep setting goals until we have saved our planet. Something as simple as riding a bike or walking instead of driving everywhere will not only improve one’s physical health, but also their mental health as they will finally feel good about what they are doing for our planet. It is imperative to the future of our planet that we rely on ourselves to make a change because if everyone relies on others to make the change we so desperately need, nothing is going to happen.

We must reduce the amount of waste we produce. If we begin to steer away from anything that cannot be recycled or composted, we will see a more sustainable environment for generations to come. When we realize that all of us must each rely on ourselves to better our planet, we will see a change, and we will ensure a prosperous future for the Earth.

As well as relying on ourselves, we must not rely on materials any longer. The Industrial Revolution is where it all went wrong, and when many of the planetary boundaries were exceeded. Fossil fuels have been used to power our economy since the Industrial Revolution (“History of Fossil Fuel Usage since the Industrial Revolution”). While they have built our economy to where it is today, they have also produced unprecedented amounts of carbon dioxide and nitrogen (“A Blanket around the Earth”). We have increased the atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration by a third since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (“A Blanket around the Earth”). This carbon dioxide is slowly breaking down the atmosphere, while the overabundance of nitrogen traps it in, allowing more sunlight to seep into Earth and be stuck there, and thus creating climate change (“A Blanket around the Earth”). Too much nitrogen can also transform forest health and cause a decline in biodiversity because plants and animals cannot get the proper nutrients they need, with so much nitrogen in the air. We must stop relying on fossil fuels and the economy as a whole. The economy runs solely on material things. Material things that are tearing our world apart. If we continue to get everything that we want, we will destroy everything that we need. We must disdain materialism. With no demand, nothing will have to be supplied, and the economy will fall. Getting rid of the economy, will get rid of fossil fuels and everything else ripping our world apart like an old piece of paper, and the Earth can begin to heal. With no fossil fuels, the climate change will not be as drastic and it will help to decrease unnecessary nitrogen flow. With less nitrogen being forced into the atmosphere, forests can thrive again, and provide a better home for various species. In rejecting materialism, we can also save various animals, that are not living prosperously, but instead being killed for our own desire for material things. Disregarding materialism may seem

insignificant, but on a larger scale it is crucial to the future of our planet and its boundaries.



Our last step in completely embracing transcendentalism and securing a future for our planet, is to develop a positive attitude towards nature. The environment provides us so much, we must respect it. We have spent too long destroying the world we live in: “We paved paradise and put up a parking lot” (“Big Yellow Taxi”). It is time we bring this paradise back, and take nature for the beautiful mystery that it is, not develop it into something that it is not. After all, we belong to the Earth; the Earth does not belong to us. It is simple. If we keep a positive attitude toward nature, then we will stop contributing to anything that will cause it harm. When we use the environment to fulfill our needs, instead of relying on fossil fuel or anything else detrimental to our planet, no more planetary boundaries will be exceeded; global warming will diminish, there will be less excess nitrogen flowing into the atmosphere, and extinction will only happen due to natural processes. All it takes is for us to believe in nature and conserve it because it does parallel our lives. If we allow and help nature to prosper, simultaneously we will prosper, as well as will our planet.

It will not be easy to reverse all the damage we have caused for the last 250 years, but if we continue on this path, our destruction is inevitable. We are faced with no small dilemma. The only way to truly turn the tides is for each and every one of us to become a transcendentalist. We must be willing to become our own person, and rely on ourselves to make the necessary sacrifices to obtain a sustainable future on Earth. We must stop caring about material things and the economy. It will only destroy irreplaceable parts of Earth, in

return for a petty gain. Becoming one with nature and respecting nature is what we must do to ensure a prosperous future for our planet while remaining in the planetary boundaries. One person cannot change the world by themselves. But, they can spark a chain reaction and begin a revolution. We have seen it before and we will see it again. All it takes is for one person to “throw a pebble in the water, and make a wave” (“Make a Wave”).

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NASA Images of Change



Muir Glacier Melt, Alaska (1941 & 2004)

Source: Glacier Photograph Collection, USGS.

Big Yellow Taxi

Joni Mitchell

They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
With a pink hotel, a boutique
And a swinging hot SPOT
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
'Til it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

They took all the trees
And put them in a tree museum
Then they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em
Don't it always seem to go,
That you don't know what you've got
'Til it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

Hey farmer, farmer
Put away that DDT now
Give me spots on my apples
But LEAVE me the birds and the bees
Please!
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
'Til its gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

Late last night
I heard the screen door slam
And a big yellow taxi
Come and took away my old man
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
'Til it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

I said
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
'Til it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

Source: AZLyrics

The Sea



Nur Shafiqah Binti Mohd Safuan (18) Selangor, Malaysia

I laid in my room, on the floor next to the wide- open glass doors: beyond those glass doors, overlooked the most beautiful scenery I have ever laid eyes on- the sea. The cool breeze of the sea calmed me down, the swishing waves of the sea soothed my fragile heart. I looked up at the milky white clouds amidst the pristine blue sky- it all looked too beautiful. I stared out over the distance- the fishing boats were coming back after their long day of fishing.

Yes, fishing, I thought.

I looked down at my semi- written paper which I was writing for my assignment- Prosperous future for our planet Earth within the safe operating space of its planetary boundaries and ecosystems?

There is no Planet B, only Planet A- these words resonated my mind, lingering all over my microscopic molecule thoughts. There is only one home and it is in so much pain. As such, we need to save it. However, I feel truly devastated to witness that not everyone care about saving or even conserving our environment. They use but they don't give back to Her. That's just wrong; because what's most dangerous when you don't save the planet is the belief that someone else will save it for you. It is everyone's job, being the responsibility of everyone, no matter where they are or even who they are.

Since we are so buried deep in the abyss of a conserving- less world, what can we do to bring ourselves out from this abyss? We need a future, and we need it now. We see everywhere around Earth where our resources are exploited greatly, all our earthly resources are being stripped off- from trees to sea creatures. Still, I believe that there are ways in which we can do to lease more time on Earth. These little yet huge steps I believe would help us a long way.

It is no secret that air pollution is a major issue right now, in regards to all the carbon we are releasing. We can't blame no one else but ourselves as we are the ones who have overseen the whole building of our civilization, till it is the shape it is now. As such, to reduce carbon emissions produced by our vehicles, it is best to do things like walking, riding a bike and even carpool. Walking and riding a bike not just help us reduce carbon emission, but can make us much healthier. Carpool is also a good way to reduce carbon emissions. For instance, the employees of a company can choose to carpool to their office; in that way, it also saves time for them and can create a much friendlier environment among them.

In South East Asian countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, trees are stripped off of wide lands to meet the demands for palm oil. As such, palm oil plantations are widely dominating the soils of Borneo, Peninsular Malaysia as well as other parts of Indonesia. This gives a tremendous impact on the environment as trees acts as the natural cooling factor of our world. Without trees, we wouldn't be able to breathe. As such, what can be done is to plant trees, so that we can have more shade and clean our polluted air. I believe that planting trees should be done in a systematic way where we can mark the amount of trees cut and replant the trees with an almost similar number. Everyone must realize the effects of exploiting our trees, and should do something to act against it, because in the end, it will only eat them up if they are blinded by the idea of money instead of creating a sustainable environment for everyone.



Perhaps one of the most important virtue when it comes to conserving our environment are the three R's- reduce, reuse, recycle. There three simple acts can ensure us all a better future. It doesn't take much to ensure a prosperous future. We should reduce our usage of electricity; by switching on lights, by reducing the usage of air- conditioners and even by switching of taps when brushing our teeth; with this, we get to conserve freshwater for our future and save on electricity. We should also reuse; this can be done by using again plastic bag packaging when we get them unintentionally by using it back as plastic bins bags. Last but surely not the least, recycle. From papers to plastic bottles, we should always make it a priority to dispose our wastes the right way.

Many of us love to eat seafood- from crabs to prawns, the taste of such seafood are divine to our palettes. We get all excited when we get to buy seafood from the market everyday but has it ever occurred your mind that having seafood everyday can totally kill the population of them all. It is in fact true; we are so blinded by it all that we don't realize how these seafood are being caught. Some fishermen in less developed countries often just fish without thinking of the after effects- they fish every day, not letting a day go by without fishing and thus leave no chance for these sea creatures to actually breed. They carry this out excessively and later on, when the time comes, they would be hit with the painful truth that there is no more to fish, that there is no more to eat.

To ensure a safe earth in the future, far from chemical threats, we should always start from now. As such, we should stop the usage of plastic bags in supermarkets. In Malaysia, plastic bags are widely used in every supermarket and are given out extensively. Albeit, in recent times, new implementation have been exercised where plastic bags are being charged, making others think twice before acquiring

plastic bags. However, we shouldn't just not use plastic bags for the sake of saving money, but on the mindset of wanting to save our world. It is best to bring our own bag while shopping as we get to keep more and save more. Little things like this are what makes it go a long way.

Good, this is good, I thought. Ending... what should my ending be. I stood up and sat, facing the blue sea. Oh, how beautiful. Why wouldn't anyone want to save it. I picked my pen up and gave a conclusion to it.

All in all, we want to secure our future but are carrying out acts which are actually destructing our future. It is unfathomable how we put in efforts in terms of stability for our unknown future but caring very little on sustainability for our known future. If we don't do it, then who else will? If we don't care, then who else will? If we don't save Her, then who else will?

I placed the paper down, smiling. The sun rays shone into the room magnificently- the last few minutes before the sun would take a long swim in the sea. It was too beautiful. I walked out, past the doors into the realms of the future. As my feet felt the warmth of the sand, I was sure about it. I smiled, because after all, I would wake up to a prosperous future.

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Source: Tourism Malaysia

Ecological Crisis, Inefficient Environmentalism, and the Need to go Further: What we can do to Make the Earth a Better Place



Martin Holmes (23)
Otago, New Zealand

It is no secret that in the twenty-first century the world is in the midst of an ecological crisis. For hundreds of years, and particularly since the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, humans have been upsetting the environments within which they live. The burning of fossil fuels, the warming of the planet, the depletion of the ozone layer, the melting of the polar regions, the poisoning of the soils and oceans with plastic and chemicals – all these issues have joined together to plunge the planet into catastrophe.

The details of this are well known and do not need to be repeated. Scientists such as James Hansen and John Houghton are better trained and acquainted with the ins-and-outs of the problem, and can explain it far better than I can (Hansen; Houghton). Others, such as the philosopher Roger Scruton and the Social Ecologist Murray Bookchin explore the environmental crisis in their works, and do a remarkable job explaining the problem to non-scientists in layman's terms (Scruton; Bookchin). Thus, if one is looking for information about the burgeoning crisis this essay may disappoint.

Instead, what I hope to discuss is a solution to the problem. How, it is asked, can we ensure a prosperous future for ourselves and our descendants on planet Earth? How can we allow human society to flourish and grow, while at the same time safeguarding the health of the planet? These are important questions; a lot of ink has been split in an attempt to answer them.

Often those concerned about the environment propose political and legislative solutions to the matter. Think, for instance, of the United Nations effort in achieving the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, or the Paris Agreement in 2015. Alternately, think of the New Zealand government's legislation banning nuclear power in its country, Ireland's phasing out of plastic shopping bags, or Clair Patterson's campaign to ban the use of lead in gasoline and tin cans. In terms of political solutions many environmental activists do not trust the corporations, or even the capitalist system. Some propose regulation of corporations by the government so as to guarantee a pro-environmental economy. Others go further in supporting various libertarian, socialist, or anarchist solutions, seeing capitalism itself as harmful to the environment.

These strategies in themselves are not wrong. Indeed, they should be supported. Legislation and politics are indispensable tools for protecting the environment because they define how civilization operates. Laws in favour of the environment would help stabilize the planet's ecosystems. So would an ecologically conscious government. The scientist Clair Patterson's example alone shows us the power of using legislation to further environmental goals. Back in the 1960s lead was being used in many products from paint to gasoline. Because it was so widely used it permeated the planet's atmosphere. Nonetheless when Patterson proved it was harmful he campaigned for it to be banned. Eventually he won, and since then the presence of lead in the atmosphere has fortunately declined dramatically.

Nonetheless I fear that in dwelling on politics and legislation we are missing the bigger picture. Why do we have a catastrophe in the first place? Politicians, corporations, and

'the system' are often blamed. So too is the technological society that has spread across the planet since the Industrial Revolution. Ultimately, however, we need to face one simple fact: it is humans who have been, and remain, the source. It was our ancestors who began mining coal and oil on a mass scale, who systematically felled the forests, and have clogged up the oceans and landfills with plastic and chemicals. It is our fellow humans in the present day who continue to allow this to happen, with some going so far as to deny there is an ecological crisis at all.

How have we been led to this position, where the future looks so bleak? I believe it is because people benefit from it. People may not like the consequences of the way things are now: the smog in the cities and the beaches awash with rubbish. They may genuinely fear the presence of chemicals in their food, and buy 'free range' and organic products whenever possible. They may wish the world was different and humans were wiser and more charitable to the world within which they live. But that is only half the story. For while they are troubled by the negative consequences it cannot be denied the short-term benefits prove tantalizing and addictive.

For example, in many parts of the world today the car economy is triumphant. In the Western world especially it is almost impossible to live without possessing a driver's license. If these cars were taken away, or even if they were subject to strict regulations by environmentalist legislation there would be an outcry. It is the same for farmers. If they were all asked to go organic, and to stop using chemicals harmful both to humans and the planet, many would refuse. With the fisheries a similar conflict would occur. If they were asked not to overfish, and to only take what they needed they would refuse, citing the need (and right) to make a profit. They would have many hungry customers to support them. So many benefits of modern society come directly from the willful destruction of the environment. It would be no exaggeration to say our economies, societies, even global civilization as it now stands, owes many (if not most) of its benefits to the pilfering of the planet.

Legislation, then, is not enough. Neither is politics. All it would do is ferment hatred between a minority of committed environmentalists on the one hand and a majority of apathetic, even hostile citizens on the other. The one would see itself as liberating the planet by doing what was necessary to protect it; the other would see it as a histrionic and tyrannical set of repressive laws designed to prevent them from living 'the good life.' This can already be seen in the tactics of some environmental groups like Earth First! and some Greenpeace activists who, while seeing themselves in a positive light, are perceived as a menace by wide sections of the public, and reveal a striking vehemence and intolerance towards anyone who disagrees with them. Ecological groups are seen in a negative light by many people in the world today, who see them as scaremongers out for their own gain.

What would actually be more helpful is for society to undergo a spiritual revival, or, if that makes readers uncomfortable, a change of heart and conscience. Only through a change in outlook can the problem begin to be solved. Francis phrased it best when he declared in his encyclical *Laodato Si* "that we look for solutions not only in technology but in a change of humanity" (9). We need to realise our freedom is not limitless, that the environment does matter, and that we have a responsibility to protect it. Rather than a resource to be pilfered for our own gain, we need to remember planet Earth is our "common home." This is the same argument put forth by Scruton, one of the wisest British philosophers alive today, in his book *How to Think Seriously About the Planet*. In it he argues the ancient oikophilia, or love for one's home – so common throughout history – was lost in the zeal for progress, technology, and consumer goods. "The solution, it seems to be, is to care for one's home" (412). Only through a recovery of the old emotions of love and awe will consciences of others be raised, making them realize the gravity of the situation. In doing so that distant problem will become our problem which we can and must solve (Scruton 2).



As a footnote, when I say spiritual I do not necessarily mean religious. Certainly I agree with religious figures like Francis, Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew in their insistence that religion helps to inspire reverence for nature. As Bartholomew stated in 1997: “to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God” (Francis 8). At the same time, it is not necessary to be religious. What is needed is a change of heart, and a worldview which treats the Earth as something to be respected rather than desecrated.

In conclusion, it is not to legislation and to politics that ecologically conscious people should turn – at least not at first. These things are good and useful, but at the same time they are not enough. If we are to devise a safe operating space for the ecosystems of the planet to flourish then humanity itself needs to undergo a change in worldview. Only when humans stop treating the world as a means to an end, and instead remember they are part of it, with responsibilities to maintain its health and vitality for future generations will the ecological crisis be averted.

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