

# FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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NEWS MAGAZINE

## Friends of the Earth and Bluewater Network

A Powerful Voice for the Planet

The Green  
Sea Turtle

Green Parenting

Rebuilding After  
the Tsunami

Wild Horses  
Threatened

# Friends of the Earth and Bluewater Network Join Forces

**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH** has just increased its capacity to defend the environment through a strategic merger with Bluewater Network. The merger will lead to a more efficient, effective and powerful voice for protecting the planet. Bluewater Network, based in San Francisco, California, has been extraordinarily successful in its 8-year history and I am delighted that they have joined us.

Bluewater Network was founded in 1996 by Russell Long and since then, they have led efforts to reduce environmental harm from oil tankers, cruise ships, ferries, automobiles, snowmobiles and jetskis. Bluewater Network was responsible for California's historic law curbing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. It convinced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to change overstated fuel mileage labels on new cars, and led federal and state efforts to promote renewable fuels to reduce global warming. Bluewater is also leading a national campaign to push Ford Motors to build more climate-friendly vehicles. In a *New York Times* advertisement, Bluewater revealed that Ford has the worst average fuel economy of any of the major car manufacturers.

Bluewater has made progress in its efforts to stop the damage to public lands and waters caused by personal watercraft and snowmobiles. Bluewater won a law suit which forced the National Park Service to address the adverse environmental impacts of snowmobiling in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park. Bluewater's research revealed that most snowmobiles and



Brent Blackwelder, President

personal watercraft are powered by two-stroke engines, which dump 25-30 percent of their fuel unburned out of the tailpipe or into the water – with devastating impacts. The air pollution from snowmobiles in Yellowstone is so bad that park rangers have had to wear respirators to protect themselves. A two-hour ride on a jetski can discharge up to four gallons of gas and oil into the water. At Lake Mead in Nevada, the Park Service estimates that on a busy weekend jetskis release 27,000 gallons of gas and oil into the park's waters. However, despite the obvious adverse impacts, Interior Secretary Gale Norton recently toured Yellowstone on a snowmobile to promote the use of these vehicles in our national parks. Bluewater continues to work on achieving an outright ban on the use of snowmobiles and jetskis in all national parks.

Friends of the Earth will benefit from Bluewater's presence and expertise on state environmental issues in California, while Bluewater's campaigns will gain

added muscle with our presence in Washington, D.C. and our ability to push an environmental agenda on the national level. Moreover, Bluewater will now have a seat at the table with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which oversees international maritime shipping safety and environmental issues. Friends of the Earth International holds special status as an observer organization with the institution and Bluewater will now be able to participate in meetings with the IMO.

**The merger of Bluewater Network and Friends of the Earth will join two organizations committed to environmental progress – ready to take on corporate polluters, and get the government back on track with spending that promotes a healthy planet and healthy families.**

Lastly, I would like to express the sorrow that everyone here at Friends of the Earth feels for the victims of the tsunami disaster. In Indonesia, the Friends of the Earth family lost the director of the Aceh office for Friends of the Earth Indonesia and his family. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. Please look for our article on page 10 which provides an update on the efforts of Friends of the Earth Indonesia.

*Brent Blackwelder*

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# Bluewater Network

## Environmental

By Russell Long

AS MY COLLEAGUE AND I stood on Chetty Beach on the southwest coast of India, we were staggered by the incredible scene around us. A buzzing profusion of traditional fishing boats were jockeying with each other in the short surf to unload basketfuls of fish into the waiting arms of men and women, who would in turn rush up the beach to auctioneers and fish vendors surrounded by small but excited mobs waiting to buy fish.

I occasionally spied a child running furtively behind the fish carriers trying to snatch a few mackerel or sardines for themselves. While a few boat owners tried to shoo them away, others nodded their heads approvingly. Many of these long, open canoe-like boats had crews of up to 38 men, standing together like subway riders during rush hour in New York City, but with fish stacked up to their thighs.

However, the outboard engines powering the craft were a distressing sight. The first outboards had arrived in Kerala State waters, one of

the world's greatest fishing grounds, in 1981 thanks to a United Nations' development program. And in 1994, while I was conducting dissertation research on the fishery, I discovered that those engines had virtually destroyed a tradition of sail and oar dating back over 3,000 years. Already, the vast majority of the 15,000 traditional boats plying Kerala's waters were using outboard engines, at a tremendous cost to the



Bluewater works to protect public lands from off-road vehicle damage. It recently scored a legal victory by limiting off-road vehicle use in Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve.

local fishers who were mired in debt in order to finance their purchase.

I observed that whenever a shoal of fish was spotted, at least thirty boats would race at full throttle to reach the fish first. It was no surprise that the boat with the most horsepower claimed the lion's share of the catch, rushing back to the beach first and obtaining the highest prices from the impatient buyers. It was also obvious that the slower, sail-powered boats — of which there were still about 4,000 — were being relegated to near-shore waters and correspondingly lower incomes.

The higher speeds of the outboards had initially led to bigger nets and greater catches, but by 1991, the fishery suddenly collapsed and thousands of fishers found themselves unable to repay their bank loans for the outboards, and with far less income than when the United Nations had first provided outboards ten years earlier. Adding insult to injury, the fishers told me that their fish now tasted like fuel from the high emissions of the two-stroke outboards.

# Puts the Brakes on Destruction

The fishery problem had no easy solutions — even the fishers acknowledged that — and they were unwilling to return to what they now considered to be menial labor associated with rowing, or sailing their craft. But it occurred to me that the two-stroke problem had a solution. So after returning to the States, I founded Bluewater Network to convince engine makers to end the sale of dirty, two-stroke marine engines and replace them with cleaner four-strokes.

In the United States, my research showed that nine million two-stroke outboards and jetskis were causing the equivalent of fifteen Exxon Valdez spills of oil and gas in U.S. waters every year, including drinking water reservoirs used by millions of Americans for boating and recreation. This antiquated engine design, unlike cleaner four-stroke engines used in automobiles and inboard-powered boats, discharges one-third of its fuel into the water unburned. Used widely in mopeds, rickshaws, snowmobiles and other forms of transit or recreation around

the world, the two-stroke adds substantially to smog and to cancer risks for people physically close to their exhaust systems. The high-pitched staccato noise easily distinguishes them from other engine-types, but their primary signature is the distinctive odor of unburned gasoline.

With the addition of our second and third Bluewater staff members, we waged a relentless battle against the recreational marine industry, and eventually succeeded in banning the sale of new two-stroke marine engines in California, setting the stage for a national ban by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and we convinced Mercury Marine, the largest manufacturer in the U.S., to end their sale of two-strokes by January, 2006, and Suzuki Marine to end their sale of two-strokes globally.

## **Ships, Planes, and Automobiles**

In the past seven years, we've used our experience with the two-stroke campaign to rapidly expand into



Bluewater works with policy makers and community groups to reduce unregulated air and water pollution from cruise ships, oil tankers and cargo ships.

other environmental problems associated with ships, planes, and automobiles. Since then, we've succeeded in reducing the environmental impacts of snowmobiles, jetskis, cruise ships, automobiles, oil tankers, airplanes, motorcycles, and MTBE, the toxic gas additive, and have promoted cleaner fuel alternatives such as biodiesel and ethanol.

We've also been fortunate to win victories in arenas where other

*(continued on page 6)*

groups have failed. For example, in one of Bluewater's more memorable feats, we conceived and sponsored the nation's first bill to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from automobiles in California. The bill created a furor as auto industry front groups ran full page newspaper ads and filled the airwaves with radio commercials claiming it would reduce speed limits, raise auto taxes, and ban SUVs – all of which were complete fabrications. But with a stampede of support from national politicians and entertainers such as President Clinton, Senator John McCain, and Robert Redford, other environmental groups joined us to win this historic battle. In the process, attention was generated around the globe, and, a precedent was set that eight other states are already beginning to adopt.

On other fronts, our research revealed that the fuel mileage window stickers on new cars may be overstated by as much as thirty percent. We petitioned EPA to revise these misleading labels. The EPA will soon make changes that will provide



Bluewater's ads in *The New York Times* exposed Ford CEO Bill Ford's broken promise to increase SUV fuel mileage and that Ford vehicles stand out as having the worst average fuel economy.

motorists with more accurate information allowing them to make more informed buying decisions that should lead to reduced emissions.

We also helped pass legislation banning the dumping of cruise ship sewage and other wastes off California's coast. The new laws will put an end to the dumping of up to two million gallons per ship, per week and have led other states to consider similar actions. Our legal fights to ban jetskis, snowmobiles, and off-road vehicles from national parks have caused many of those areas to slam the door to such damaging uses. Our work to clean up the nation's ferry system will soon lead to construction of vessels that are ten times cleaner than any commercial vessels ever built. And, our battle to convince Ford Motors to work with Congress to double the nation's fuel mileage averages has so far helped push the company to commit to five new hybrid vehicles and an 80 percent greenhouse gas reduction target by 2030 – not enough, but a good start.

In the past few years, we've been publicly applauded by Senator Barbara Boxer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi for our efforts to protect public lands from global warming, and pilloried by *The Wall Street Journal* as a "hard line green group" for our work pushing the auto industry to use clean off-the-shelf technologies in all of its vehicles. Our work has been featured on CNN, and NPR, and in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Detroit News*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and dozens of other media outlets.

## The Future

Bluewater Network's unique value has always been to discover smart ways of shaping policy and corporate agendas with new strategies



Bluewater opposes the habitat destruction caused by snowmobiles in national parks and works to achieve a complete ban in parks across the country.

and approaches. This was our approach in our very first campaign against two-stroke recreational marine engines, and continues to this day. Our framework for environmental change is based on the notion that as leaders, we need to seed (not concede) the future.

The merger with Friends of the Earth will substantially increase our effectiveness. It provides our West Coast staff with significantly more firepower in the halls of power in Washington, D.C., while providing Friends of the Earth with a strong presence in the most environmentally progressive state in the Union. Our hard-hitting approaches and our core values are similar. We both tackle tough issues well ahead of other organizations, and win battles against long odds.

As a result of this historic merger with Friends of the Earth, we look forward to building an even more powerful organization to protect this planet for future generations. ○

# Green Parenting

By Cindy Thomashow, Director of Environmental Education/Antioch NE Graduate School, Director of Center for Environmental Education Online, [www.ceeonline.org](http://www.ceeonline.org)

**AS PARENTS, WE ARE** hard-wired to take care of our children. Ever vigilant and concerned about their safety, health and wellbeing, we hope that our choices will sustain them. Parenting is even more difficult now that we can no longer count on water, air, and food to be completely safe. Our children and grandchildren may be at risk. We have to think more carefully about what kind of food we serve, the cleanliness of the tap water, indoor air quality and toxic products in our households. At first glance, it can seem overwhelming.

But taking steps toward a greener lifestyle isn't so hard anymore. We have green resources and products at our fingertips that weren't available just five years ago. Making green choices is better for your family's health and helps heal the planet. Green simply means sustaining a healthy earth system by meeting the needs of the present without compromising resources available for future generations.

It doesn't require a graduate course in environmental science to choose green living. It does require having a greater awareness of how your consumer choices may affect health and environmental quality. No need for radical simplicity or giving up what makes you comfortable - thinking green is easier than ever and the resources to make good earth/good child decisions are at your fingertips. Here are a few steps to consider:

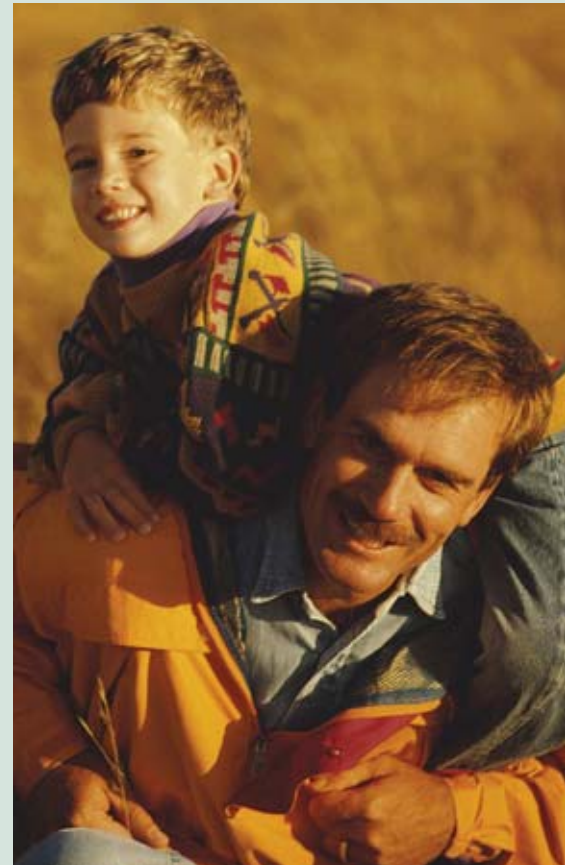
**Think Green Out-loud:** Involving your children in green critical thinking leads them into the habit as well. Talk about why you are choosing certain food and not others? Why is one light bulb better than another? What does packaging have to do with your choice?

**Teach children to read product labels:** Pick one or two labels to research with your children. Help them decipher ingredients and discuss organic alternatives. Locate the far-away places some foods originate from on a map and discuss how much it costs for a product to reach your supermarket. Pick out a local product as a substitute.

**Clean up the cleaning cabinet:** Most commercially advertised household cleaners are hazardous to our health...and the health of the planet. There are healthy alternatives that clean with the same strength.

**Reducing waste, there is no AWAY:** Where does the waste go? Unwind the mystery of the trashcan by creating an ongoing storyline that follows the life of something thrown away. This can become a conversation or an art project that spawns a growing awareness of trash and its travels. Make recycling a family experience by teaching your children to sort recyclables. Also, challenge your children to find ways to reuse items creatively and choose items with less packaging.

**Get outside:** Most Americans spend 85% of their day inside. Slipping outside for a walk for an hour a day, builds healthy habits and introduces



children to nature, whether in the city, suburbs or the country.

**Practice your values in obvious ways:** Being a good role model will influence your children more than your words. Let children know that you are taking positive steps to counter the environmental issues they hear about on the news or in school. For example, if you have a hybrid car, tell them about what a difference it makes. If you choose public transportation, let them know why.

**Educate yourself and them:** Involving children in your own green living research will enable them to make good choices. ○

# Campaign News

## Special Report on President Bush's Budget

The Bush administration's 2006 budget has targeted environmental and natural resource programs for budget cuts that will put spending ten percent below last year's level.

The budget:

**Drains clean water funds.** The budget provides a meager \$730 million for the Clean Water State Revolving fund, a program that protects public health by helping communities across the nation improve their wastewater infrastructure. This is a major drop from last year's level of \$1 billion. And, last year's funding didn't even come close to meeting the program's needs. The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that by 2019, as much as \$450 billion could be needed for this program.



**Derails Amtrak funding.** The budget completely zeroes out support for Amtrak, which seriously threatens the long-term survival of America's passenger train system. According to David Gunn, President and CEO of Amtrak, the Bush administration budget for Amtrak is "no plan for Amtrak other than bankruptcy."

**Cuts funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.** The budget falls far short of meeting the president's promise to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The budget completely eliminates funding for the LWCF grants, which states use to protect open space and promote recreation.

**Threatens the Arctic Refuge.** Once again, the budget assumes \$2.4 billion in revenue from drilling the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, even though the majority of Americans oppose opening the Refuge to drilling and the Senate has rejected the plan.

## Victory! L'Oreal, Revlon and Unilever Agree to Make Safer Cosmetics

Three of the largest cosmetics companies in the world, L'Oreal, Revlon and Unilever, have agreed to remove chemicals that are known or highly suspected of causing cancer and birth defects from their products. These chemicals are banned in cosmetics sold in the European Union and we have pressured top cosmetics companies to commit to remove the chemicals from products in the U.S. and around the world. In total, 60 companies have made the commitment to remove these chemicals.



This is an important victory for consumers and our health, but there is much more to be done. To keep up with the latest news on this campaign and find out more, go to <http://www.safecosmetics.org>.

Photo credit: U.S. Bureau of Land Management



## Public Lands under Assault

The United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages a network of more than 26 million acres of public lands called the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). This network of lands is comprised of national monuments, wilderness areas, scenic and historic trails, and scenic rivers. The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (pictured above) is just one of the many spectacular monuments in the NLCS network.

Since the formation of the NLCS in 2000, annual appropriations of \$38 to 42 million – about \$1.50 an acre – have not met the system's needs. Moreover, many of these lands are being treated as commodities to be exploited. The BLM sells the rights to use these lands for oil and natural gas drilling, coal mining and large agricultural operations at rock bottom prices. These commercial operations destroy habitats, pollute our air and water, and jeopardize endan-



gered species. Friends of the Earth is championing these national treasures and will be working to ensure the federal government fully funds the NLCS, strengthens protections for the lands in the system, and provides opportunities to preserve more land. To find out more about how Friends of the Earth is working to promote and protect these rugged and diverse lands, please visit: <http://www.foe.org>.



### Victory! Lighting up the Nation's Capital with Wind and Solar Energy

Friends of the Earth led a coalition effort to bring clean energy to our nation's capital. District activists waged an aggressive campaign which has resulted in a mandate for power companies to generate a substantial percentage of power from wind and solar energy. The District joins 17 other states that have sidestepped federal inaction to bring real relief to the many towns and cities suffering from poor air quality due to power plant emissions.

Photo credit: Jim Dougherty



### Victory! D.C. Emergency Bill Bans Transport of Dangerous Chemicals

In January, the Washington, D.C. City Council successfully passed emergency legislation to ban shipments of the most dangerous chemicals through the city. The District is a high-threat terrorist target and residents have long been vulnerable to terrorist attacks against trains and trucks carrying dangerous chemicals. With the coordinated support of Friends of the Earth and the local environmental community, the D.C. Council banned the most dangerous shipments. Friends of the Earth will continue the campaign and work to pass permanent legislation in D.C. with the ultimate goal of pushing Congress and the president to come up with a security plan that protects everyone.

### Kyoto Protocol Enters Into Force - Without the United States

Guess who was missing from the picture when the Kyoto Climate Change Protocol came into force on February 16 with 141 countries on board? That's right, the Bush administration, which continues to resist serious efforts to address climate change and global warming. The most recent sign of the Bush team's stubborn refusal to acknowledge the impacts of climate change came in

response to a lawsuit filed by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and four California and Colorado cities. The suit presses two government agencies - the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation - to account for the climate impacts of oil pipelines and other projects they finance around the world. The administration's reaction: the connection between greenhouse gases and climate change has not been established. We'll see the government in court on April 29.

### Victory! Putting the Brakes on Off Road Vehicles in Big Cypress National Preserve

Bluewater Network helped convince a federal judge to uphold a National Park Service plan that protects Big Cypress National Preserve and the Florida panther from rampant off-road vehicle (ORV) use. The court ruling allows the Park Service to regulate swamp buggies, which have created more than 23,000 miles of rutted trails throughout the preserve. This use has caused erosion and damaged the habitat of the endangered Florida panther. The victory ensures the long term protection of the preserve and its wildlife from destructive ORV use. ○

Photo credit: George Gentry, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services



# Rebuilding After the Tsunami

By Michelle Medeiros & David Waskow

**WHEN THE CATASTROPHIC TSUNAMI STRUCK** Asia on December 26, 2004, Friends of the Earth Indonesia – known as WALHI – was not spared. WALHI's director for Aceh, the region of Indonesia that was most severely affected by the disaster, was killed by the surging waves along with his wife and child. Mohammad Ibrahim, the Acehese director, was a much beloved advocate for the environment and people of Aceh.

In the aftermath of the tsunami, WALHI moved quickly to provide on-the-ground emergency relief and ensure that the local community was empowered to direct implementation of relief efforts. As the largest non-governmental organization in Indonesia, representing a coalition of over 500 groups with over 1 million members, WALHI is providing food, water, sanitation, shelter, and health services to North Sumatra. WALHI has now begun planning ahead for the next phase of the recovery process — reconstruction planning. With billions of dollars in governmental funds, multilateral assistance, and private aid promised to their country, there is an opportunity for great good to be done if the aid is distributed and used fairly and sensibly. WALHI believes that affected communities should be the primary decision-makers and architects of the recovery and reconstruction. It is vital that there be proper consultation with communities in planning, implementing and monitoring the recovery and reconstruction process.

Aid should also enable those affected by the tsunami to rebuild their livelihoods. Rather than spend-



Tsunami victims shelter beneath this makeshift structure in Lhoong, Indonesia.

ing all the money on physical infrastructure, aid can help communities by creating self-recovery programs and mobilizing practical expertise in the communities.

WALHI is also advocating for reconstruction efforts to be carried out in an environmentally sustainable way. The ecological destruction from the tsunami has not yet been fully assessed in Indonesia, but it is believed to have had a tremendous impact, especially in the coastal areas on rivers and lowlands that are critical for people's livelihoods. Early reports from the affected areas indicate that industrial development in recent decades that destroyed mangrove forests and coral reefs – for example, in order to establish shrimp aquaculture – greatly exacerbated the impacts of the tsunami.

As reconstruction efforts move forward, WALHI is pressing for environmental impact statements for all

major reconstruction activities, covering both on-site impacts and the impact of materials to be used. Recently, in the wake of the tsunami, the Indonesian Minister for Forestry increased the annual allowable cut for Indonesia's forests by 400%, without any ecological justification.

The demand for materials for rebuilding will put enormous added pressure on Indonesia's forests and limestone areas. Wherever possible, building designs should incorporate local materials that cause minimal environmental impact. Building designs should also be socially appropriate – based on designs created with and approved by local communities, and ecologically appropriate – with low energy use and responsible materials.

If you would like to help WALHI in its efforts, please visit their website at <http://www.eng.walhi.or.id>. ○

# Wild Horses Threatened



Photo credit: Jerry Sirtz, U.S. Bureau of Land Management

By Chris Pabon

**THE MUSTANG, A SYMBOL OF THE AMERICAN WEST**, is in grave danger. Congress has just passed legislation allowing the sale of wild horses to slaughterhouses. Unless you act quickly, this proud symbol of freedom and the American frontier will be auctioned off to slaughterhouses and served up overseas.

More than 37,000 wild horses and burros, whose ancestors were the heart of the Pony Express, roam federal lands in 10 Western states. But their days of freedom might soon be over.

Last December, Senator Conrad Burns (R-Montana) quietly slipped in an amendment to a 3,000-page bill signed by President Bush that repealed a 34-year-old prohibition on the slaughter of wild horses. The government can now sell horses over

a certain age that have not been successfully adopted after three attempts. There are no restrictions on what happens to these horses once they are sold.

At the turn of the last century, wild horses were viciously killed by ranchers who saw them as competition for their cattle, who grazed the

same lands. The horses were often poisoned, run over cliffs or even shot on sight. The number of wild horses once totaled 2 million and in a little over 100 years their numbers have dropped to less than 40,000.

Take action to save one of the last cultural icons of the old West. ○

## ACTION TOOLKIT

### Protect our Wild Horses!

Contact your representatives in Congress and urge them to support House Bill 297 sponsored by Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Ed Whitfield (R-KY), and Senate Bill 576 sponsored by Robert Byrd (D-WV). These bills will restore the ban on the slaughter of wild horses and prevent them from ending up on someone's dinner table. For a sample letter and links to email your members of Congress go to <http://www.foe.org/takeaction>.



# Friends of the Earth Investigation Reveals Government-packaged Environmental News



By Richard Bell

**CAN YOU TRUST** what you see on the evening news? In the United States, our expectation has always been that news reports would be objective and unbiased.

That's why the recent revelations that the federal government has been secretly paying journalists to tout government programs, and providing TV stations with phony video news releases, is so disturbing. Viewers have no way of knowing that the government was using their tax dollars to sell them the government's views.

Through a Freedom of Information Act request, Friends of the Earth has discovered that the Department of the Interior has been producing and releasing misleading

video news releases and video footage that fail to disclose to viewers that they are government products. These video news releases, on subjects like energy resources on the coasts, the resurgence of a species of hawk, and West Nile virus, may very well have been broadcast on your local news.

"The American people deserve to know when their tax dollars are being used to create government propaganda," said Korey Hartwich, policy analyst at Friends of the Earth. "The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has already said that the government should not be producing this kind of propaganda. It's time for the Bush administration to put a stop to it, in every agency of government."

These Interior Department video releases are an insult to America's democratic ideals. In our view, the Interior Department should be proud to claim ownership of every video press release it puts out. With your support, Friends of the Earth is fighting to guarantee that the Interior Department labels all of its video releases so that TV viewers know who produced these releases. Such clear and unequivocal labeling will help us to better understand whether (or how) the Interior Department is fulfilling its mission to protect our country's public lands.

To view two examples of the video news releases, go to: <http://www.foe.org/new/releases/0305doi.pr.html>

## Letters to the Editor

I thought FoE's newsletter cover story by a series of varied environmental experts was superb. I spoke with friends at the Adirondack Nature Conservancy and sent an e-mail to John Adams at NRDC urging him and his staff to read it. (perhaps all environmental agencies automatically read each other's newsletters, but they're busy folk and I thought a few nudges wouldn't hurt). I was impressed with the idea of co-opting and even flying under the banner of ancillary issues (as apparently the NRA does), an excellent thought and also like the realization that your organization needs to cooperate in some fashion that will be advantageous to all of you and the planet.

*Mrs. Enid Rubin*

The environmental movement is still trying to act nice. How many E organizations have attacked the Bush administration for weakening and subverting our environmental laws and the EPA?

There is too much emphasis on cute endangered animals and not enough about America's mothers and children being poisoned by mercury and other toxins. While the Bush administration talks about family values, environmentalists value families! Say so, loud and clear. This is God's creation that we are trying to defend and we're not going to get very far until we share our science and concern with the spiritual appeal of the churches. Many are trying to emphasize the environment and we should be helping them to be recognized and to be more effective on the issues. Conservationists also need to work closely with the peace movement, for environmental deterioration and nuclear war are the two greatest threats to the future of Life on Earth.

*Peter Cohen, Santa Barbara,  
author of Project Protect:  
Save the NPT!*

On the cover of the Winter 2004 Newsmagazine, you ask "Where do we go from here?"

I think I know.

The scientific community and environmental organizations, in other words, those of you who have the knowledge of what is happening to the earth, need to unite and pool your efforts. You will develop clout that way.

And then you need to spread the word! Educate: explain, describe, inform. Don't assume anything. There is much just plain ignorance. And it must be dispelled before action will ever come about.

Please get to it!

Sincerely,  
*Catherine McEwen*

To send a letter to the editor, email Lisa Grob at [lgrob@foe.org](mailto:lgrob@foe.org). Submissions may be edited for clarity and space and may be published on the Friends of the Earth web site.

## THANK YOU TO MEMBERS

## With Great Thanks!

### Thank You for your Working Assets Vote!

Friends of the Earth wishes to thank all of our members who voted for us on their Working Assets ballots. With one stroke of your pen you have made an enormous difference for our organization.

### Thank you for supporting Friends of the Earth in the Combined Federal Campaign.

Federal workers in the Washington area pledged a record \$455 million to

the local Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Friends of the Earth is one of the many groups that receives donations through the CFC. Thank you for choosing to support Friends of the Earth (CFC# 0908). We hope to count on your support again next fall.

### Wishing a Happy Retirement for a True Friend.

Friends of the Earth and the District of Columbia Environmental Network (DCEN) wish Anne Allen, outgoing

executive director of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, much joy in her retirement. Anne played a crucial role in forming DCEN and encouraging groups to join the network. Among the many successes achieved by DCEN, the network recently led efforts which resulted in a ban on the transportation of hazardous chemical cargo through the neighborhoods of Washington, D.C.

# The Green Turtle



By James R. Spotila

**THE GREEN TURTLE**, *Chelonia Mydas*, is a most magnificent sea turtle. Large, with a distinguished, inquisitive face, it glides through the water with ease. Its shell is nicely rounded and gives off a brilliant sheen in the water that slowly fades as it dries. Its well-formed flippers have pronounced scales that grade from large to small to large, from the front edge to the rear. The green turtle's flippers appear a bit small for its body size but are quite efficient for propelling it through oceans.

For centuries people around the world have considered the green turtle an ideal food source. Once abundant, easy to catch in water or on land, and easy to store alive for months, the green turtle supported the colonization of the New World. Even conservationist Archie Carr praised the merits of the famous London Alderman's soup, the clear green turtle soup that was the highlight of official banquets until the late twentieth century.

Green turtles feed and nest throughout the tropic and into sub-

tropical oceans. Today green turtles migrate extensively to and from their nesting beaches just as they were observed by Columbus and other early explorers. However, individual turtles spend most of their time in small areas feeding on seagrasses and algae. Often a green turtle will have a favorite sleeping location and return to it night after night.

Truly an international animal, green turtles swim and feed in the coastal waters of at least 140 countries. They lay their nests each year in about 80 of those countries. The largest nesting colonies are at Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, where about 22,500 females nest each year, and Raine Island on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia with 18,000 nesting females in a season

## Life History

Female green turtles lay one to seven clutches of eggs in a single nesting season, though most lay three. Each clutch contains an average of 110 eggs, the whole nesting

process taking two to three hours to complete. However, green turtles rarely re-nest the following year and sometimes wait as long as four to six years.

Green turtles grow quite slowly on their seagrass and algae diets, presumably because the food is very low in protein. Fed a diet rich in protein, such as is provided for captive turtles at the Cayman Turtle Farm, they can grow more rapidly and reach maturity in five to seven years.

It takes longer for a green turtle to reach maturity than any other sea turtle—any other turtle, for that matter. In Costa Rica and Florida females mature at 26 or 27 years of age while those in Australia take 30-40 years because there is less food available. This is quite old for any vertebrate and simple math dictates that a high percentage of each year's class of turtles must live to maturity if the species is to survive.

Green turtles typically live about 19 years beyond maturity or 45-59 years. Given that a female nests in six or seven of those years and lays about 330 eggs each nesting season, she will produce 1,900-2,300 eggs in

her lifetime. Factoring in natural predation, fungus infections of nests, and other embryo failure rates, one can expect each healthy female to produce 1,000-1,900 hatchlings.

## Decline of the Green Turtle: The Threat of Extinction Continues

The historic decline of green turtles around the world is one of the most-cited and best-documented conservation issues. By 1900 the worldwide green turtle population was only a small fraction of its historic abundance, and it has declined another 50-70 percent since then. In Michoacán, Mexico, the nesting colony numbered 25,000 females per season as recently as 1970s. Now there are about 850. Part of the decline was caused by hunting.

A simple thing like the taking of eggs can destroy a population despite the fact that for many years there seems to be no effect. The adults die eventually and the juveniles become adults, but there is not a new class of juveniles. Eventually the number of nesting females diminishes. At this point even ceasing egg collection will not restore the old populations to their former levels. There are so few hatchlings produced, and so few survive to adulthood, that the number of egg-laying females remains low. When there is large-scale egg collection it may take 30-40 years to see a population crash.

Despite improving conservation efforts throughout the world, egg collection still occurs at 45 percent of all nesting beaches and harvesting of nesting females occurs at 27 percent of the beaches. Intentional “fishing” of adults and juveniles affects 47 percent of populations and accidental capture in fishing trawls, nets, and long lines affects 49

percent. Habitat loss on nesting beaches and at sea affects 25 percent of populations. Disease, particularly fibropapillomatosis, is a growing threat and has a serious impact on 42 percent of green turtle populations.

Green turtles are recognized internationally as endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and are protected in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and in Appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). They are listed by the United States and by many other nations as protected in national legislation (for example, the U.S. Endangered Species Act). The recently ratified Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles should be a great help in improving protection throughout the Americas.

Because of these laws and agreements the harvest of eggs and adults has been slowed and some nesting beaches have been protected. The use of Turtle Excluder Devices has been implemented, especially in the United States, Mexico, and South and Central America. However, the long list of countries where the taking of eggs and adults still occurs, legally and illegally, indicates that much more needs to be done to save the green turtle from extinction.

## The Future

Our goal should be to restore green turtles to population levels at which they can fulfill the ecological roles they performed in the past. In all honesty, most beaches will never be restored to prehistoric levels, at least not for centuries to come. We will likely never see sailboats bumping into herds of migrating green turtles, but we must continue to pres-

sure nations to stop legal and illegal taking of green turtles.

There are many ways to proceed and each needs a champion. Restoring nesting turtles to historic locations like the Dry Tortugas and the Cayman Islands, where they once abounded, would take a lifetime and perhaps more, but what a reward. Another way to make a difference is by opposing residential and commercial development of green turtle nesting beaches.

The commercial fishing industry will adopt techniques that are harmless to turtles only if governments hear louder calls from their citizens than from those who fish. Raise your voice and demand responsible fishing everywhere.

The future for green turtles is uncertain. If nothing changes they will likely become extinct in most of the world during this century, hold-



ing on in a few places where protection is strong. If we act, however, they may soon reach the bottom of their decline and begin to climb. If so it will result from practical steps taken one beach, one country, one law, one village at a time. And it will have been worth it. ○

Excerpted from Spotila, James R. *Sea Turtles: A Complete Guide to Their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation*. Pp. 97-108 Copyright 2004. Reprinted with permission of The Johns Hopkins University Press. [http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/title\\_pages/3481.html](http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/title_pages/3481.html)

# Notice: Annual Meeting of the Membership, Election of Board Members

**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH WILL HOST** its annual board meeting, Friday, June 24 at 12:30 p.m., in the Washington, D.C. office. Harriett Crosby and Edward Lao Rhodes are running uncontested for the two open slots on the Friends of the Earth Board of Directors. Members may cast votes at the annual meeting. If you would like to attend, contact Lisa

Matthes at [imatthes@foe.org](mailto:imatthes@foe.org) or by phone at 202-222-0730. Members may also vote by proxy ballot. To do so, copy or clip the mailing label from this newsmagazine and mail your vote to Board Election, Friends of the Earth, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC, 20036 or fax 202-783-0444.

Harriett Crosby is cofounder of Institute for Soviet American Relations, which supports and provides training and technical resources to environmental activists in the former Soviet Union. Harriett manages an ecological retreat and learning center in Maryland. She has been a member of the board of directors since 1992.

Edwardo L. Rhodes is Vice Chancellor for Academic Support and Diversity and Associate Vice President for Student Development at Indiana University Bloomington in addition to being a professor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Edwardo has been a member of the board since 1999.



## LEAVING A LEGACY ...

### We don't inherit the Earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children...

For more information on bequest giving or a brochure on how to make a will, call Rosemary Greenaway toll-free at 877-843-8687, x722 or email [rgreenaway@foe.org](mailto:rgreenaway@foe.org).



A copy of the latest Financial Report and Registration filed by this organization may be obtained by contacting us at Friends of the Earth, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW Suite 600, Washington DC 20036-2008. Toll-free number: 877-843-8687. Or, for residents of the following states, by contacting any of the state agencies: **CALIFORNIA** - A copy of the Official Financial Statement may be obtained from the Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts, Department of Justice, P.O. Box 903447, Sacramento, CA 94203-4470 or by calling 916-445-2021. **FLORIDA** - A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. Florida registration # CH960. **KANSAS** Annual financial report is filed with Secretary of State #258-204-7. **MARYLAND** For the cost of copies and postage: Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401. **MICHIGAN** MICS 10926. **MISSISSIPPI** - The official registration and financial information of Friends of the Earth, Inc. may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement by the Secretary of State. **NEW JERSEY** INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING 973-504-6215. REGISTRATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. **NEW YORK** Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. **NORTH CAROLINA** FINANCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION AND A COPY OF ITS LICENSE ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE STATE SOLICITATION LICENSING BRANCH AT 1-888-830-4989. THE LICENSE IS NOT AN ENDORSEMENT BY THE STATE. **PENNSYLVANIA** - The official registration and financial information of Friends of the Earth may be obtained from Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within the state 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. **UTAH** - Permit #C495. **VIRGINIA** State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218; 1-800-552-9963. **WASHINGTON** - Charities Division, Office of the Secretary of the State, State of Washington, Olympia, WA 98504-0422; 1-800-332-4483. **WEST VIRGINIA** West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.



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