

# FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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NEWSMAGAZINE

## The Dirty Truth

Coming Clean on Cruise Ships



# A Clean & Healthy Future

**THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER** call to mind relaxing times with friends and family. In this issue Friends of the Earth offers you ideas for how you and yours can stay safe while enjoying the season.

Just in time for vacation season, our cover story explains the environmental and health dangers of glossy, cruise ship holidays and updates you on what we're doing to stop this industry from harming beach goers and marine life alike. Under current law cruise ships are legally allowed to dump all sorts of horrendous waste directly into the ocean without ever treating it to make it safer for the environment.

Edward Abbey, the irreverent author of *Desert Solitaire*, encouraged environmentalists to take some time off, have fun, and smell the flowers, saying that if we did we would outlive the polluters and prevail. In the spirit of Abbey, our staff has prepared a list of inspirational books to assist you with summer vacation reading. Our staff has reviewed their favorite books, from science fiction stories like *Next* that eerily foretell the dangers of genetic engineering to the newest book by Michael Pollan that asks readers to emulate the relationship our grandparents had with food. The Library of America has just published an outstanding overview of great American writing on the environment. The 900-page volume *American Earth: Environmental Writing since Thoreau*, edited by Bill McKibben, is a treasure trove of refreshing ideas and inspiration.



Brent speaks at Earth Day on the National Mall.

Even though summer is a time of relaxation, we aren't sitting back while the world wastes away. Friends of the Earth has been carrying out a number of campaigns to protect public health – preventing nano particles from entering the food and consumer product markets without proper safety testing, pushing for a moratorium on risky synthetic biology, and most recently, releasing a report exposing the outrageous risks imposed on infants and small children when they absorb carcinogenic fire retardants in strollers, car seats, portable cribs and similar products. The report, called *Killer Cribs*, can be found on our website at [www.foe.org/pdf/Killer\\_Cribs\\_Report.pdf](http://www.foe.org/pdf/Killer_Cribs_Report.pdf)

Summers in DC are getting hotter every year, yet while policy makers here at home struggle to create sound climate change policy, in the UK – thanks to the campaigning of

our member organization Friends of the Earth England, Wales & Northern Ireland (EWNI) – more than 400 Members of Parliament have agreed to tackle global warming. You'll find more on Friends of the Earth EWNI's "Big Ask" later in this issue.

As Congress continues to examine ways to fight global warming we include here a run down of the sort of carbon financing vocabulary that any climate legislation is bound to include – and whether they are long-term solutions or just another example of industry give-aways.

Please remember that as we get closer to November elections it is important to elect pro-environment candidates at every level—local, state, and national. With your help our dreams for a clean and healthy future will be realized.

*Brent Blackwell*

The Dirty Truth .....	4	We Had a Ball .....	11
EcoBites .....	8	Carbon Finance.....	12
Jim Kuhns: Global Steward .....	9	Books .....	15
Friends of the Earth EWNI.....	10	Thinking Ahead .....	16



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# The Dirty Truth

## Coming Clean

*By Neesha Kulkarni*

WITH THE ARRIVAL OF SUMMER, many people look forward to time away from school, work, and the responsibilities of everyday life. As a vacation choice, cruises have grown increasingly popular over the past two decades, making the industry one of the world's fastest growing tourism sectors. Last year more than 9 million passengers took cruises on the seventeen largest cruise lines.

Cruise ships offer passengers the chance to visit new and exciting destinations and view pristine coastal habitats and marine and animal life

that a large cruise ship goes through 12,000 pounds of beef, 7,500 pounds of seafood, 10,000 pounds of fresh fruit, 48,000 eggs, and 500 gallons of ice cream *per week*.

### What Goes In Must Come Out

The down and dirty truth is that after consumption, this food and waste has to go somewhere. At home, what you flush down the toilet is sent to a municipal treatment plant before it can be discharged into a water body. However, what most people don't know is that what you flush down the toilet in your cruise ship stateroom can be dumped untreated

into the ocean to float with the fish. The dumping of sewage into coastal and ocean waters has significant implications.

The contaminants in human waste and wastewater – known as blackwater or sewage – pose a risk to public health not only through the food supply, as fisheries and shellfish beds can be contaminated, but also through direct contamination of water ingested by surfers, beachgoers, and water-sport enthusiasts. In addition, blackwater contains nitrogen and phosphorus that promote

excessive algal growth, which in turn consumes oxygen in the water and can lead to fish kills and the destruction of other aquatic life, including coral. Algal blooms have been implicated in the deaths of more than 150 manatees off the coast of Florida.

In spite of the potential harm, a cruise ship (which often carries as many passengers as there are people in a small town) can legally dump human waste directly into the water as long as it is at least three miles from shore. Within three miles of shore, cruise ships are allowed to discharge sewage treated by a Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). However, the EPA's MSD regulations governing sewage discharges from ships have not been revised since 1976. More importantly, EPA does not require testing or monitoring of sewage discharges, so even if an MSD malfunctions or a ship discharges raw sewage without using an MSD within three miles of shore, there is no way of knowing whether a violation has occurred. Recently, in response to a new cruise ship law in Alaska, some cruise ships traveling to Alaska have started using Advanced Waste Water Treatment Systems. While these treatment systems are more effective than MSDs they do not eliminate metals which can bioaccumulate in

*(continued on page 6)*

# on Cruise Ships

with little effort. When not in port or on deck watching the passing scenery, passengers can while away the hours engaged in any number of activities, including swimming and mini-golf or they can refuel with food after an afternoon of fun. An average ship has multiple dining rooms serving a plethora of cuisines, sometimes lavishly adorned with fruit carved into flowers and accompanied by elaborate deserts and ice sculptures. Food is available on a cruise ship 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's been estimated

Type of Pollution	The Source	What's In It
<b>Blackwater</b>	Human waste and wastewater from toilets and medical facilities.	Bacteria, pathogens, disease, viruses, intestinal parasites, pharmaceuticals, nutrients (i.e. nitrogen and phosphorous).
<b>Graywater</b>	Wastewater from sinks, showers, galleys, laundry, and cleaning activities aboard a ship.	Fecal coliform bacteria, detergents, oil and grease, metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, nutrients, food waste, and medical and dental waste.
<b>Oily Bilge Water</b>	Oil mixing with water in the hull of a ship that typically houses engines and machinery.	Oil and oil byproducts.
<b>Hazardous Waste</b>	Dry-cleaning, photo processing, and equipment cleaning, including medical waste, batteries, paints and paint thinner and discarded and expired chemicals, and fluorescent lights.	Fluorescent and mercury vapor, heavy metals, solvents, and unused or outdated pharmaceuticals.



the food supply. They also produce larger quantities of sewage sludge – a concentrated waste left over after the sewage treatment process. Sludge, like sewage, can be dumped just three miles from shore.

In 2006, more than 25,000 days of closings and advisories at ocean, bay and Great Lakes beaches occurred, most due to the presence of bacteria associated with fecal contamination. Two popular cruise ship destinations, Jamaica and Florida, are prime examples of how dumping waste into our oceans causes extreme harm to marine biodiversity. In 2002, only five percent of the coral reefs around Jamaica supported living coral compared with 60 percent 10 years earlier. In 2002, about 90 percent of Florida's coral reefs were believed to be dead or dying. Although cruise ships are not the only cause of this devastation, they are one source of harm that can and should be controlled. It is imperative that we protect our ocean resources and the public health from this pollution.

In addition to sewage, cruise ships also produce and discharge a number of other polluting substances.

**Graywater:** “Graywater” is the name given to wastewater from sinks, baths, showers, laundry and galleys. Graywater is typically the largest source of liquid waste generated by cruise ships. While it might seem like this wastewater would be less pol-

luting than blackwater, EPA's recently released Draft Cruise Ship Discharge Assessment Report (released as a result of a Friends of the Earth lawsuit) revealed that graywater can contain levels of fecal coliform bacteria higher than those found in untreated domestic wastewater. As a result, graywater poses many of the same public health and environmental risks as sewage. However, unlike the three-mile requirement for disposing of untreated blackwater, under federal law, untreated graywater can legally be discharged anywhere except the Great Lakes, including while a ship is docked in port near towns and beaches.

**Oily Bilge Water:** The bilge is the lowest part of the hull of a ship and typically houses engines and machinery. Oil often leaks from engines and machinery into the bilge during operation and the performance of routine maintenance activities. These bilge spaces are periodically flushed with water and pumped dry. Before the bilge can be cleared and the water discharged, federal regulations require that accumulated oil be extracted. The extracted oil can then be reused, incinerated, and/or off-loaded in port. Unfortunately, cruise ships have not always been very compliant with the regulations governing oil discharges. In a 2000 report, the U.S. General Accounting Office found

that from 1993 to 1998 alone, cruise ships were involved in 87 confirmed cases of illegal discharges of oil, garbage, and hazardous wastes into U.S. waters – and these are only the confirmed cases. Even small concentrations of oil can kill or chronically disable fish. In humans, oil and byproducts from the biological breakdown of petroleum products can pose health threats if ingested.

**Hazardous Waste:** Cruise ships offer many of the same amenities that can be found on dry land – including dry cleaning and photo processing. Unfortunately these services produce the same hazardous waste byproducts as their land-based counterparts. Although cruise ships do not generate large quantities of hazardous waste, the waste they do generate can cause harm to sensitive marine life and needs to be carefully managed so that it doesn't find its way into bilge water, graywater, or the solid waste stream. Additionally, hazardous waste tracking measures do not apply when cruise ships off-load waste at international ports, opening up a large loophole through which hazardous waste can be lost.

## Friends of the Earth Works to Clean Up Cruise Ship Pollution

Friends of the Earth is fighting on both the local and national level to put the brakes on cruise ship pollution.

In 2000, concerned with increasing levels of pollution from the ever growing cruise industry and a series of incidents in which cruise lines admitted to routinely dumping oil waste and hazardous chemicals into U.S. harbors and coastal areas, Bluewater Network (which became a part of Friends of the Earth in 2005), with the support of 58 other organizations, petitioned EPA to regulate cruise ship pollution. EPA failed to

## How much pollution do cruise ships actually discharge?

In *one week alone* a large cruise ship generates approximately:

- 210,000 gallons of blackwater (human waste),
- 1 million gallons of gray water (water from sinks, baths, showers, laundry, and galleys),
- 25,000 gallons of oily bilge water, and
- More than 130 gallons of hazardous wastes.

act on the petition, so Friends of the Earth sued and forced EPA, through a settlement agreement, to release its Draft Cruise Ship Discharge Assessment Report in December 2007. In the Draft Cruise Ship Discharge Assessment report, EPA found that, “[s]ewage contamination in swimming areas and shellfish beds poses potential risks to human health and the environment by increasing the rate of waterborne illnesses.” EPA also found that, in a recent sample taken from cruise ships in Alaska, the average discharge exceeded EPA’s fecal coliform limit by *10,200 times*. EPA is obligated to release the final report in December 2008.

On a legislative front, following two seminal reports released in 2003, advocating that cruise ship pollution loopholes be closed, Bluewater Network took the lead and worked side by side with Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA) to introduce the *Clean Cruise Ship Act* (CCSA), a bill that would reduce pollution from cruise ships. The CCSA would ban discharges of sewage, graywater, and oily bilge water from 0-12 nautical miles from shore and place stringent limits, consistent with best available technology, on discharges occurring from 12-200 miles from shore. The CCSA would also ban the discharge of incinerator ash, sewage sludge, and hazardous

waste except at onshore disposal facilities. Additionally, the bill would establish a monitoring, sampling, reporting, and inspection program requiring unannounced annual inspections. The bill would also establish an observer program requiring a trained, independent observer aboard each ship to ensure the ship’s compliance with law. The CCSA has been reintroduced this year and we are working to strengthen its provisions and increase Congressional support for the bill in this session with the ultimate goal of passing the bill in 2009 under a new Administration.

In California, we helped pass five bills which collectively ban cruise ships from discharging sewage, graywater, oily bilge water, sewage sludge, and hazardous waste into state waters and prohibit cruise ships from burning garbage, paper, sludge and any other materials in on-board incinerators while operating in state waters. In addition, we successfully petitioned the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for a ban on these same cruise ship discharges within the sensitive and ecologically important National Marine Sanctuary System — the ocean equivalent to the national park system. California has four of these sanctuaries along its coast, including the Monterey Bay and Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries.

Friends of the Earth has also expanded its cruise ship work into the Pacific Northwest. We have successfully protected the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary in Washington State from cruise ship discharges and compelled the Port of Seattle to send hazardous dredged material to a landfill rather than dumping it back into Puget Sound. We are also working with the Seattle Port Commission and other state agencies to protect the delicate marine ecosystem of Puget Sound from the rapidly expanding threat of cruise ship and ocean-going vessel pollution and have successfully strengthened an agreement with the cruise industry to limit cruise ship discharges in the Sound.

### Cleaning up the poop deck: what you can do to help

Whether you are scheduled to take a cruise or not, you can call your Member of Congress and ask him or her to support the Clean Cruise Ship Act of 2008 as it moves through Congress. You can also urge your local representatives to do something about the problem of cruise ship pollution in your area. Currently, Alaska, California, and Maine are the only states with laws that address cruise ship pollution. More states could benefit from local action to stop the destruction of human health and the environment. If you are already scheduled to take a cruise, you can ask to meet with the environmental officer on board the ship to learn more about what they do with their waste. Let them know that you care about what cruise ship pollution is doing to our oceans and public health. You can also call up the major cruise lines and tell them that you want them to stop dumping their waste indiscriminately and to support legislation to fix the problem. ○

# Keeping the Lid on Pandora's Box

**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH** *Healthy People* campaigners Ian Illuminato and Gillian Madill spearheaded a two-day teach-in and summit that brought together high-level experts in the fields of nanotechnology and synthetic biology. The convention educated participants on the health and safety implications of such technologies and built support for strategies to alert the public and pressure Congress to set regulations. ○



Gillian presents the implications of synthetic biology.



Ian takes part in a discussion with other participants.

# Peace-ing Together Climate Justice

**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH** co-hosted a climate justice speaker event that showcased Nobel Peace Laureates and co-founders of the Nobel Women's Initiative, Wangari Maathai and Jody Williams. The women discussed their vision of 'climate justice' – an approach to climate change that recognizes differential responsibilities for developed and developing countries, and puts the rights of people, especially women, at the center of the climate debate. ○



Wangari Maathai, Jody Williams and Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton at the event.

# Victory for Public Lands!

**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCORED** a victory for nature-lovers and natural habitats alike when, after suing the National Park Service for allowing off-road vehicles (ORVs) to illegally traverse park lands, Friends of the Earth and two other groups finally

reached a settlement to protect these national treasures. The Park Service agreed to boost visitor education of the park guidelines and laws against ORV use and to increase penalties for violations. ○



ORVs can significantly harm plants and animals as they tear across wild areas.

# Jim Kuhns: Global Steward

Interview by Hillary Blank

**JIM KUHNS IS A** Charter Member of the Global Stewardship Council at Friends of the Earth, a longtime supporter of environmental education and outreach, and a retired business professional living with his wife Linda in Northern California. Jim serves on the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Baykeeper/Waterkeepers and Warren Wilson College where he is on the Business and Economics Advisory Committee and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council of its Environmental Leadership Center. Jim sat down with us to talk about his commitment to Friends of the Earth, the environment, and the balance needed for a healthy world.

## Why is the environment important to you?

*In my youth, my concern for the environment was a part of everyday life. My brother Bob and I would catch and relocate poisonous snakes, rather than kill them, so they couldn't bite people. My environmental activism began 25 years ago when I became involved with an Outward Bound School, which encourages environmental education, self confidence and respect for others, and as a result, my dedication to environmental concerns strengthened. I am incredibly interested in educating children and adults on the environment's importance to a healthy world.*



Jim Kuhns with his wife, Linda.

## How long have you been involved with Friends of the Earth and what keeps you engaged?

*I joined Friends of the Earth five years ago as a member, in part due to its important environmental research and campaigns. They expose people to environmental issues, spread the word, and get people to act, and this is something I consider very important. The more I learn about Friends of the Earth, the more impressed I become. When I mention to people that I am involved with Friends of the Earth, they respond, "That's great!" Organizations that are dedicated to education and action are very inspiring, especially when they are run efficiently.*

## Why are you part of the Global Stewardship Council at Friends of the Earth?

*Our annual gift helps enhance a worthy cause for the benefit of the*

*world. My wife and I do what we can to support the organizations we are committed to, and it really boils down to the fact that organizations cannot do their job without the financial capability to do so. The more financial support people are able to give to an organization, the more that organization will be able to do for the people and the earth. It is fundamental to an organization's success to have a broad base of people who give as generously as they can.*

## What message would you like to send to people who want to protect the environment?

*Clean air, water, and soil – these are the fundamental life-giving elements and we must protect them. Without healthy food, clean air and drinkable water there is no life.*

*If we don't care for the environment, the environment won't care for us. The more we do to help the world survive, the longer we will survive. With all that is going on around us, it is easy to get wrapped up in the present moment, but we must think about the future. If we don't safeguard the environment, our children, grandchildren, and generations to come will miss out on the world which we enjoy so much. Regardless of future generations, helping to protect the environment can make your life better today. ○*

# Raising the Bar by Growing the Grassroots:

## Friends of the Earth England, Wales, Northern Ireland (EWNI) rallies United Kingdom to force Parliament's hand on global warming.

By Josh Hilgart

**IF THE U.S. CONGRESS** wanted to improve global warming legislation here at home it could get some good ideas from across the pond, where Friends of the Earth EWNI has generated enormous pressure to produce a bill requiring annual targets to reduce the U.K.'s carbon emissions.

The public campaign to bring about this legislation – “The Big Ask” – launched in May, 2005, and in just two months had gathered a coalition of more than 200 Members of Parliament (MPs) and other groups to produce and present the details of proposed legislation. Today there are well over 400 MPs on board.

With savvy advertising, media and grassroots lobbying strategies, Friends of the Earth EWNI wove support for passing their model legislation in the United Kingdom.

Backed by celebrities like Gillian Anderson, Jude Law, Stephen Fry and Radiohead front man Thom Yorke (who has been a major public face of the campaign since its inception), “The Big Ask” was soon everywhere.

Friends of the Earth EWNI organized concerts, rallies, and in-person lobbying visits between members of the public and Parliament. It commissioned studies, distributed economic research and brought experts before the public that made the case for urgent action. But most importantly, it mobilized nearly a quarter million citizens to join the campaign and pressure the government.

Passage of a bill to set limits on carbon emissions in the U.K. now appears imminent, and Friends of the Earth EWNI is now focused on



The staff of Friends of the Earth EWNI in London.

making the bill more comprehensive and its limits more stringent as it enters the final stages.

Friends of the Earth EWNI sets the standard when it comes to capacity building, grassroots mobilization and communication. “The Big Ask” campaign’s success is a testament to their ability to get the public organized and armed with a clear message.

While the organization is one of the largest members of Friends of the Earth International, with close to 180 employees and an annual budget of around \$20 million, it is its volunteer grassroots groups that give it real punch.

It organizes more than 230 local chapters throughout England, Northern Ireland and Wales – many of which have been around for most of the organization’s 37-year history.

These groups make up networks of tens of thousands of activists in regions around the nation that operate both independently on local issues – like getting more bike paths or improving recycling services – and collectively to mobilize for national initiatives like “The Big Ask.”

Great care is taken to support and nurture these groups. The national

office creates handbooks for every group, outlining strategies and issues that work to change localities and increase local membership. It also publishes a regular newsletter exclusively for the volunteer groups, highlighting innovative local strategies, success stories, common problems and new issues. There is a large department in the main office in London dedicated solely to providing support services for the local groups, as well as paid, locally-based regional coordinators, who develop personal relationships with the volunteer groups in their area.

Friends of the Earth U.S. has been coordinating with Friends of the Earth EWNI in recent months to share lessons and strategies on a more regular basis, and we look forward to an increase in joint-campaigning on issues common to our countries.

As for “The Big Ask,” it’s headed to Europe—Friends of the Earth EWNI President Tony Juniper and Thom Yorke held a press conference with members of Friends of the Earth Europe to announce plans to get citizens across the continent to go to their officials with their own big ask. ○

# We Had a Ball!

By Marsha Mather-Thrift

**MORE THAN 320 PEOPLE** turned out for a sold-out event on May 16th to support Friends of the Earth and get a sneak preview of the new Cavallo Point Eco-Resort, Conference Center and Environmental Institute at a restored military base on the coast of San Francisco Bay. Guests enjoyed a picture-perfect evening on a terrace with views of the Golden Gate Bridge, sampling fine California wines and hors d'oeuvres from the resort's Michelin-rated chef. Afterwards the party moved indoors for an action-packed evening program, which included performances by Chevy Chase, Robin Williams and Shana Morrison—touring partner and daughter of Van Morrison.

Chevy Chase served as MC and introduced fellow comedian and actor Robin Williams, who wowed the crowd with an inspired performance of comedy centered on global and environmental hot topics. "I'm glad to be here with Friends of the Earth," quipped Williams. "Friends of Uranus is meeting elsewhere tonight and they have a LOT less people."

Chase served up laughs before and after he introduced the comic to



photo credit: Margot Duane/planetmargot.com

Robin Williams & Chevy Chase.



photo credit: Margot Duane/planetmargot.com

The awardees with Brent Blackwelder.

the crowd, noting that after he became famous he never imagined there was anyone who would be more famous and more brilliant.

Three awardees received special recognition during the evening. The Friends of the Earth Political Leadership Award went to California Assemblyman Mark Leno for his work in sponsoring a bill to replace harmful and potentially carcinogenic fire

retardants in furniture and toys with safe alternatives. The Friends of the Earth Green Building Award went to Tom Sargent for his work in restoring historic buildings at two Bay Area locations—the Cavallo resort at Fort Baker which is up for LEEDS certification for its energy efficiency and the Thoreau Center for Sustainability which houses nonprofit groups in the Presidio.

Brent Blackwelder presented the Green Globe Youth Award to Jessica Assaf, a high school senior who, since the age of 15, has led a campaign to create teen awareness and political activism to get toxic chemicals out of cosmetics. After "body burden" testing revealed a high level of toxins in her bloodstream Jessica, flanked by her friend and compatriot Carly Wertheimer and her 10-year old sister Jenny, stood before the crowd and renewed her promise to keep working for a safer world.

Friends of the Earth raised \$90,000 to support its programs, thanks to the generosity of the evening's donors and sponsors—most importantly Passport Resorts and Cavallo Point, who donated generously to ensure the evening's success. ○

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# Carbon 101

By Elizabeth Bast and Michelle Chan

**IF YOU'VE BEEN PAYING** attention to the global warming debate, or following what the Presidential candidates have been saying about climate change, you've probably heard some of the following terms: carbon pollution, carbon trading, carbon permits, carbon cap, carbon offsets, carbon credits, carbon neutral. This vocabulary is supposed to be used to count, account for, and ultimately reduce greenhouse gas pollution (often simply called "*carbon pollution*") that leads to global warming.

But what, in reality, do these terms mean? Can they actually help us reduce carbon pollution?

## Setting the framework: carbon trading

Congress' latest global warming plan included a "cap and trade" system for reducing carbon pollution. Under this system, the government sets a cap, or limit, on the total amount of carbon pollution that big industries, such as electric utilities, can emit into the atmosphere. Industries seeking to release global warming gases into the air must obtain permits from the federal government to do so. These permits give them per-

mission to emit carbon pollution, with the cumulative emissions of all *carbon permits* not exceeding the amount set by the cap. Over time, the *carbon cap* is lowered incrementally, thus bringing down emissions levels. Since the federal government is limiting the amount of global warming pollution that can be emitted into the air, the permits themselves are endowed with economic value that represents the cost of reducing pollution. How these permits are distributed in the economy will determine the effectiveness of the system.

Ideally, the system is set up so that all carbon permits are sold off or auctioned instead of being given away. Using this method a company must buy carbon permits for all of the carbon pollution it emits. If a company emits more carbon pollution, it has to buy more permits. As the carbon cap is lowered, the carbon permits will become more limited, and the price of the carbon permit will rise. Eventually, it will become more cost-effective for companies to reduce their own carbon pollution than to continue to buy carbon permits. Under some cap and trade systems, not all carbon permits

(also called "allowances") are auctioned. They may instead be given away to companies based on how much they emit, with the number of permits getting ratcheted down as the cap lowers – this "grandfathering" rewards company for previous pollution.

Regardless of how a permit is obtained, the system allows for the trading of permits between companies. Once all the permits are distributed, companies that want to emit more than their share of pollution can buy permits from other companies that are polluting less, creating a *carbon trading* system. The theory goes that the companies that can most cheaply reduce their emissions will, and so carbon pollution will be reduced at the lowest possible cost to society.

## Carbon offsets

A *carbon offset* is a greenhouse gas reduction effort that one party conducts on behalf of another, carbon-emitting entity. For example, an electric utility that has trouble operating within its emissions quota, or an environmentally-conscious driver who wants to go "*carbon neutral*," can fund carbon pollution reduction

projects to compensate for their emissions. (For voluntary efforts to go “carbon neutral,” see below.)

Cap and trade systems can be designed to allow regulated companies to meet their emissions quota by purchasing carbon offsets from projects in unrelated sectors. For example, an electric utility company could pay for a landfill project to capture and destroy methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In practice, the landfill operator would proactively capture the methane with the intention of packaging these reductions as “carbon credits,” which can be sold within a carbon trading system. Currently, there are some heated debates about what kinds of offset projects should qualify for carbon credits. The cap and trade section of a recent leading climate bill considered by Congress would allow forestry and agriculture offset projects (for example planting trees to sequester carbon dioxide) to qualify for carbon credits, because those sectors fall outside the proposed cap.

Another key question is how many carbon credits should be allowed to come from offset projects, for instance projects that reduce greenhouse gases produced

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in industrial processes, build hydropower stations, capture methane from landfills, or sequester carbon dioxide through tree plantations. Offset projects carried out in developing countries may be relatively cheaper to complete, but they also allow unscrupulous U.S. companies to buy their way out of making carbon pollution reductions themselves. Another problem is that it is often hard to prove whether, and

how much, carbon pollution has actually been saved. For example, was a hydropower dam going to be built regardless of the funding provided by carbon credits? Are trees planted to capture carbon still alive after five years? Finally, concerns also are emerging about carbon offset projects that destroy social and environmental systems. \*See The Carbon Connection box.

All these questions must be addressed through regulation and monitoring, which vary depending on the market, the type of credit and so on. Currently, many developing country-based carbon offset projects – called Clean Development Mechanism projects – are regulated under the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UN certifies these projects and issues carbon credits, which can be sold into carbon trading schemes for purchase by regulated companies.

### Voluntary offsets

Carbon offsets may also be part of voluntary offset schemes – you have probably heard of the potential for offsetting your holiday travel, events like weddings and other sources of emissions. But buyer-beware – these schemes vary widely, and with poor



regulation and verification, the possibility for fraud is significant.

For example, a wind-farm developer looking to sell carbon offsets must first estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would be produced if a typical power project were built instead the wind farm. Boosting this “business as usual” estimate increases the calculated number of greenhouse gas emissions saved by the wind farm, and thus the number of carbon credits the project generates, so there is a lot of incentive to measure poorly, and there may be little regulation to ensure that the measurements are done accurately.

And with programs selling offsets for anywhere between \$2 - \$25 per ton, it pays to be a savvy consumer. Clean Air Cool Planet has published consumer tips for voluntary offsets, since going “carbon neutral” is becoming increasingly popular with environmentally-minded individuals and companies. But Friends of the Earth stresses that consumers should first reduce personal emissions as much as possible – that means driving less, changing to more energy efficient appliances, considering a rooftop solar array, and buying recycled products and local, organic food.

In addition, Friends of the Earth is working to make sure that the rapidly-developing carbon trading market, with all the investment it is attracting, is structured and regulated in ways that are more just and that protect people and the environment. In the U.S., we are undertaking advocacy efforts to ensure that

**Friends of the Earth is working to make sure that the rapidly-developing carbon trading market, with all the investment it is attracting, is structured and regulated in ways that are more just and that protect people and the environment.**

any cap-and-trade system includes a 100 percent auction, an aggressive cap and reduction schedule, and that companies take responsibility and make their carbon pollution reductions at home rather than buying credits from abroad.

To help developing countries make carbon reductions and deal with climate change impacts, we are advocating that some of the revenue produced from the auction system be used to assist those countries that are less responsible for climate change in dealing with climate impacts and transitioning to low-carbon economies. In this way we are working to stop environmentally and socially harmful offset projects (such as big dams, forest projects which shove indigenous peoples off their lands, or rainforest-destroying biofuel plantations) and advocating for safer ways of reducing carbon pollution by providing truly clean and renewable energy sources and supporting more sustainable development practices.

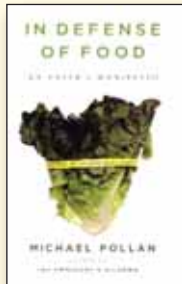
For information on the Clean Air, Cool Planet Consumer Guide to Voluntary Offsets, go to: <http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/ConsumersGuidetoCarbonOffsets.pdf>

# Summer Reading List

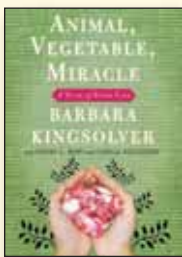
**FRIENDS OF THE EARTH STAFFERS** share reviews of their favorite books for summer vacations and good reads all year round.

“Eat food, not too much, mostly plants” is the simple maxim behind Michael Pollan’s new book, **IN DEFENSE OF FOOD** (Penguin, \$21.95). He argues that many of us try very hard to eat well, but are constantly barraged by food industry marketers, nutritional scientists, and journalists who send mixed messages meant to keep us confused while lining their pockets. Pollan wants to bring back our connection to real food, the kind our grandmothers would recognize, saying, if we “pay more for better, well-grown food, but buy less of it, we’ll benefit ourselves, our communities, and the environment at large.”

– Becca Connors



As a food and agriculture enthusiast who has spent time working at farms and glorified gardens, I was intrigued by Barbara Kingsolver’s year-long challenge to live exclusively off her own land. Kingsolver and her family vowed to buy only food raised in their own neighborhood, grown by themselves, or learn to live without it. **ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE** (HarperCollins, \$14.95) makes a passionate case for the importance of rural life, diversi-



fied farming, and a family kitchen where everyone is involved.

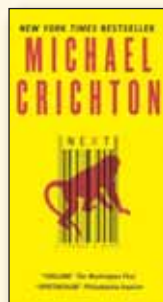
– Kate McMahon

We are fed soundbites from politicians that always seem to be arguing against “handouts” for the poor and reassuring us that the free market will cure all. But *New York Times* investigative reporter Michael Johnston warns that while the wealthy preach the benefits of a free market economy, they are increasing their affluence through their own special interest projects. In **FREE LUNCH** (Portfolio, \$24.95), he delves into the collusion that is “business as usual,” exposing subsidies for stadiums and secret payouts to CEOs. While fuming at the hypocrisy and greed of the few at the expense of the many, I realized how vital Friends of the Earth’s work is as we strive hard to root out such greed.

– Becca Connors



With the emergence of genetically modified crops, cloned livestock, glow-in-the-dark bunnies, mice growing human ears, and even DNA manufactured from scratch to create entirely new forms of life it appears that we’ve come a long way from Watson and Crick’s discovery of DNA in 1953. In **NEXT** (HarperCollins, \$9.99), Michael Crichton takes us on a scary journey, where geneticists create a part-human, part-chimp boy and bounty



hunters are hired to kidnap and steal tissue samples from children in a most disturbing patent grab. Crichton has been quite public in his belief that humans are not causing global warming. Most climate scientists will tell you that he’s dead wrong on global warming, but he is right to warn of the very real dangers of genetic engineering. Crichton includes a short essay at the end of the book that argues for the elimination of gene patenting, one of the central parts of the Friends of the Earth Genetic Technologies Campaign, as one way to handle this next generation of new technologies.

– Gillian Madill

It’s widely accepted that biodiversity loss through habitat destruction, climate change and other man-made causes is bound to have ecological and economic consequences. However in their book **SUSTAINING LIFE** (Oxford, \$34.95), Harvard Medical School physicians Eric Chivian and Aaron Bernstein have uncovered a threat that may hit closer to home for skeptics of the importance of biodiversity. This tour de force analyzes the direct role that the biodiversity of a healthy ecosystem has on human health – from a decline in medical research and the availability of medicines to the emergence and explosion of disease. In non-technical language this resource stands as the best evidence that human health depends on the health of the natural world.

– Lisa Matthes



# Providing for the Future

We don't inherit this earth from our parents; we borrow it from our children. Leaving a legacy of support for the planet is one way that you can ensure that future generations enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment. By supporting Friends of the Earth with a charitable trust you can donate generously without taking away from loved ones who survive you. Through charitable trusts, your heirs can receive a fixed or variable income for a period of time you

choose. When the trust terminates, the remaining funds become available for charitable use. Or, if you prefer, you can create a trust that makes payments to Friends of the Earth for a period of time you determine, after which the trust assets are returned to you, your heirs, or others you name. For more information, contact Marsha Mather-Thrift at [mmather@foe.org](mailto:mmather@foe.org) or call (866) 217-8499, ext. 13.



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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