

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

## OCEAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Inside this Issue

- Ocean Health and the Environment
- Climate 2008
- Green Computers
- 2009 Resolutions: Walking
- Green Recipe Corner
- Upcoming Events

### Quick Fact

Not all compact fluorescent light bulbs are created equally. They have never been compared for mercury content and life expectancy, until now. The Environmental Working Group has created a guide to CFL's comparing mercury content and how long they last. If you are shopping for CFL's see their *Green Lighting Guide* at [www.ewg.org/node/27220](http://www.ewg.org/node/27220)

Declining ocean health is the result of a complex set of problems; climate change, overfishing, and pollution. These problems are more immense than many realize; the issue even topped the list of the Top 25 Censored Stories for 2007.

In 2005, researchers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory found clear evidence the ocean is quickly warming. They discovered that the top half-mile of the ocean has warmed dramatically in the past forty years as a result of human-induced greenhouse gases. Even so, it is argued that the biggest threat to our oceans is the practice of unsustainable harvest leading to collapsing wild fisheries. In fact, we have damaged our oceans so badly that scientists have concluded that many marine species will collapse and even become extinct within the next few decades. The Department of Commerce reported that at least 28 percent of the fish stocks are officially

“overfished” and another 19 percent are “subject to overfishing.” (“The Catch” by Michael W. Robbins, published in Mother Jones)

Pollution in the world's oceans comes from many places. Garbage, especially plastic pollution endangers every species, but it's possible that petrochemical pollution, mercury and “dead zones” pose bigger threats. Areas of depleted oxygen occur at river mouths. Rivers carry pollution and fertilizers that cause “dead zones” where marine life can not survive. There are over 400 such zones counted worldwide, the worst being from the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico. Finally, while the rest of the world burns fossil fuels for their energy and transportation, the emissions distribute mercury all over the globe falling to the waters. It then sinks to the bottom where it is consumed



Full Net from [naturalpatriot.org](http://naturalpatriot.org).

and becomes more concentrated moving up the food chain to the top predators. This is why mercury in seafood has become dangerous to human health. In addition, the increasing carbon dioxide in our atmosphere has been changing the acidity of the ocean. The oceans absorb CO2 from the atmosphere becoming more acidic, which kills off marine life and coral reefs.

Where does the practice of farm raised fish play into this? Well, it isn't a solution to overfishing the wild populations of marine life. The U.S.'s demand for seafood surpasses what our fisheries provide; over half is imported from all over the globe. Fish farms are *continued on P. 2*

## Climate 2008

Global Top 10 Warm Years (Jan-Nov)	Difference from Average °F
2005	1.10
1998	1.05
2002	1.03
2007	1.01
2003	0.98
2004	0.98
2006	0.96
2001	0.90
2008	0.87
1997	0.81

With the record setting cold and snow in Spokane for 2008, it is easy to think that maybe global warming isn't really happening. But according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the global January-November 2008 temperature for combined land and ocean surfaces was +0.86°F above the 20<sup>th</sup> century average, making it the ninth warmest on record. Even if December turns out to be a cold month globally, 2008 is still likely to be among the top ten warmest years on record.

From the NOAA website Global warming has also been melting Arctic ice at an alarming rate. In September, sea ice was at the second lowest level on record, behind 2007. The low of 1.74 million square miles

reached on September 12<sup>th</sup>; 0.86 million square miles below the 1979-2000 average minimum. Interestingly, in the Southern Hemisphere sea ice set records with the largest coverage for the months of January, March, and April 2008.

Satellite measurements show that more than 2 trillion tons of land ice on Greenland, Alaska, and Antarctica has melted since 2003.

Experts from the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Colorado have found that temperatures this fall in some Arctic areas north of Alaska were 9 or 10 degrees F above average. This drastic change is known as "Arctic amplification". As the ice pack melts, the newly exposed earth absorbs heat that would normally be reflected off the

snow, causing average temperatures increases to such a large degree.

Looking at just the United States during the first 11 months of 2008, the contiguous U.S. experienced the coolest average temperature in more than ten years. Even so, 2008 is projected to be about 0.3° F above the 20th century (1901-2000) average yearly temperature.

All the above information comes from the NOAA's National Climatic Data Center, the world's largest active archive of weather data. Global warming and climate change are complicated issues. To investigate more thoroughly the world's climate for 2008, go to:

[www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/2008/ann/global.html](http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/2008/ann/global.html)



Large iceberg in Greenland. (Credit: iStockphoto/Rob Broek)

## Ocean Health cont'd.

*continued from p. 1*  
also kept in bays, where rivers distribute pollution and contaminants. The fish are susceptible to diseases from living in contained spaces and are sometimes genetically modified (GMO). Fish occasionally break free from the contained farms and enter the ocean where they can spread unusual diseases and GMO genes into the wild.

Next year two major re

ports will be released on the state of the oceans: the Oceans Report from the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the report of the U.S. Oceans Commission. The advance word on both is that the news will not be good. The last major U.S. report on the oceans was 30 years ago. That report warned that "there may be a risk some day of severely declining oceans." The inside word on the upcoming reports is that they will

conclude that the oceans are today in severe decline.

The oceans are our collective responsibility. We all have to ask the questions: What did they used to look like? What are we putting into them? Where did these fish we are eating come from? Are my food preferences jeopardizing the health of the oceans?

*Additional resources:*  
[www.shiftingbaselines.org](http://www.shiftingbaselines.org)  
and [www.bluefront.org](http://www.bluefront.org)

## Seasonal Recipe

### Ginger-Glazed Parsnips

1 Tbsp butter or margarine

1/2 Tbsp honey

1 lb. parsnips (about 3 to 4),  
peeled and thinly sliced

1/4 to 1/3, C vegetable or  
chicken broth

1 to 1 1/2, tsp freshly grated  
ginger root

Salt and pepper to taste.

Melt butter in a medium saucepan. Add honey and ginger to the saucepan; then add parsnips and sauté for about five minutes or until lightly glazed. Stir in broth. Bring to a low boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, for about 10 to 15 minutes or until tender. Check parsnips after five minutes and add more broth if needed. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves four.



## Green Computers

When a computer dies it either enters a landfill, or it might be recycled here in the US. Unfortunately, some also are shipped to the developing world where often children end up taking its components apart by hand, melting toxic bits over fires to recover traces of lead and heavy metals. Some of the most contaminated places on the planet are in China where computers and other electronics are disassembled.

Another significant impact comes from their energy requirements. The electricity needed to power computers worldwide costs \$250 billion per year, with only about 15% of that power spent computing, the rest is wasted when computers are on but not being used. As computers become faster and more powerful, they consume more electricity. Just a few years ago



computer power supplies were relatively small 250-350 watts. Now, it is typical to see 500 to 600 watt power supplies being used.

When purchasing a new computer look for whether it has been rated on its toxic content and energy consumption. The most important certifications are EPEAT (Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool), RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) and Energy Star 4.0. All three of these certifications are standardized, so they are more specific in their assessments than the marketing claims or green initiatives of the past.

The EPEAT has most

comprehensive rating on a computer's environmental attributes. It evaluates computer desktops, laptops, and monitors based on 51 environmental criteria including Energy Star compliance. The EPEAT Gold rating is awarded for the least toxic components and the most energy efficiency. Visit available computers.

The new Energy Star 4.0 certification assesses the power consumption of PCs, but it doesn't cover other criteria like toxicity. To comply with the new Energy Star 4.0 standard, a desktop PC must use under 50W in idle mode and 4W when asleep.

RoHS addresses toxicity by measuring levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, and flame retardants. However RoHS doesn't count batteries, which are regulated separately. *Continued p. 4*

## 2009 Resolutions: Walking

What's your New Year's resolution? If any part of it involves saving money or getting in shape, double your efforts to create a sustainable Spokane community. Help your neighborhood become walkable. Here are some tips from [TerraPass.com](http://TerraPass.com) and local news and links provided by FutureWise:

1. Learn about development issues in your neighborhood.

[EnvironmentalPriorities.org](http://EnvironmentalPriorities.org) has a fact sheet for Transit Oriented Communities, and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council ([srtc.org](http://srtc.org)) has a new website for [SmartRoutes.org](http://SmartRoutes.org).

2. Find local groups who have already started at [LivableStreets.com](http://LivableStreets.com) and [FutureWise.org](http://FutureWise.org). Local resources are available at [CompleteStreets.org](http://CompleteStreets.org), [\[eRoutesInfo.org\]\(http://eRoutesInfo.org\) for safe routes to schools, and \[Transportation for America \\(t4america.org\\)\]\(http://TransportationforAmerica\(t4america.org\)\).](http://Saf-</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

3. Participate by walking and biking and assess the walkability of your neighborhood at [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com).

# Upcoming Events

## **2/5-2/15 Spokane International Film Festival**

See Website for times and locations. Call 624-2615 or see [spokanefilmfestival.org](http://spokanefilmfestival.org)

## **2/9 Food, the American Diet, and Localism**

Panel discussion at SFCC in the SUB AB; 11:30-1:30. Info: [paulha@spokanefalls.edu](mailto:paulha@spokanefalls.edu).

## **2/10 Wastewater Reuse Lunch & Learn Workshop**

Liberty Lake Water & Sewer Bdg, 22510 E Mission Ave; 11:30-2:30. Discussion of conservation, affects of climate change and wastewater issues in Eastern WA.

**2/10 Red Gold** Film about the current fight for resources; 7 pm. Free. Gonzaga, Cataldo Hall, 502 E. Boone Ave. 360-739-8060

**2/10 Green Drinks** at Ross Printing Co, 1611 E

Sprague. Every 2nd Tuesday; 5:30-?, locations vary.

**2/12 Out Of Gas** Melissa Ahern, director of the Northwest Climate Change Center, will speak about the future effects of oil depletion; at 7:30 pm. Free. Whitworth, 300 W. Hawthorne Rd. 777-3270

**2/14 Art and Craft Fair** and bake sale at Community Building sponsored by Spokane Women's Rugby Club. 35 W Main, call 496-9722 for more information.

**2/15 Community Roots Winter Market** at Fresh Abundance by PEACH, 2015 N Division; 11-4. Monthly markets are 2nd Sundays, will be weekly in late spring. Call 435-5210

**2/18 Toxic Toy Testing** Bring 3-5 plastic products

to be tested by an XRF analyzer for free. To sign-up [jdawson@watoxics.org](mailto:jdawson@watoxics.org), visit [www.watoxics.org](http://www.watoxics.org)

**2/24 Drop-in Knitting** South Hill Library, minimal knitting instruction is available, ages 10 and up are welcome. 4th Tuesday every month; 3:30-5:30. Call 444-5383 for info.

**2/22 Earth & People Sustainability Forum** on U.S.A. economic recovery at Community Bldg. lobby, 35 W. Main, 1-4:30p. Call Bob Zeller at 624-4712.

**2/28 Meet the Producer & Learn** about community supported agriculture at the Spokane Tilth Open House. 12-4pm at Community Building Lobby, 35 W. Main, Spokane.

## **Green Computers**

*Cont'd from p. 3*

The U.S. EPA estimates that purchases of EPEAT-registered PCs over the next five years will reduce hazardous waste by more than 4 million pounds, eliminate more than 1 million pounds of nonhazardous waste, and save more than 200,000 megawatt hours of energy—enough to power 2 million homes.

Living Green  
SNAP  
212 W 2nd, ste 100  
Spokane, WA 99201

Phone: 509-744-3370  
Fax: 509-744-3374  
E-mail: [livinggreen@snapwa.org](mailto:livinggreen@snapwa.org)



Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

We're on the Web!

[www.LivingGreenSnap.org](http://www.LivingGreenSnap.org)

*This publication is funded in part by grants from the Washington State Department of Ecology.*

