
TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY



by Biegun Wschodni P. UNSPLASH

Spring is on the way!

BY TS EDITOR RIMA P.

Some weeks ago, I involved myself in a couple of online discussions, both related to sustainability, that were a bit upsetting.

The upsetting points were the anger and scepticism being displayed, criticism of positive ideas and suggestions, general negativity and disrespect for people taking part. I am super opinionated, but I believe that in order to achieve anything we need not only to make sustainable choices in our own daily lives, but also to encourage, give good examples, and to see the positive points in other people's ideas, instead of being angry towards and shaming those who we don't think get it completely right. Let's respect each other on this journey.

Just like the viewpoints in any online discussion, this issue of TS is a bit of a mixed bag of issues and ideas. Among other things it includes CO2 emissions, cryptocurrencies, banks, water poverty, and tourism in Alaska.

The spring is coming, so maybe let's all try to be a bit calm and joyful. Maybe order some seeds for your organic garden, relax, and sit and spend an hour with us.

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"I felt my lungs inflate with the onrush of scenery – air, mountains, trees, people. I thought, "This is what it is to be happy."

-SYLVIA PLATH, THE BELL JAR

DO YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF THE PROJECT?

We want to grow together with our readers. If you have any suggestions, ideas or maybe have written an article that you would like to contribute to Towards Sustainability, then please do get in contact with us! This is a FREE newsletter that can be read online and downloaded by anyone, as well as shared through social media. Write to us at hello@platformaeko.eco

SPECIAL THANKS to Susanna and Bob for joining us in this TS issue!

THANK YOU to everyone who became a part of our community, together we can make a bigger impact and you are encouraging us to move forward.

Seedlings by Rima P.

"I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps it says, "Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again."

LEWIS CARROL



DONATING TREES

BY RIMA P.

Think globally and act locally, we've all heard this phrase so many times, and who could deny it's importance, especially these days. The team behind TS believe that each of us should take part and do what is in their power to support the planet we call our home.



by Hans-Jurgen Mager

With this small newsletter we aim to spread awareness about environmental problems and also to share news about planet positive projects.

We want to encourage everybody to move towards sustainability, towards being more eco-friendly in their daily lives as well as taking part in actions and initiatives to undo some of the damage we've already caused.

Our community of readers come from different corners of the planet, so when we decided to donate to a tree planting project on behalf of TS readers, we chose to plant 150 trees in a land of amazing biodiversity, Madagascar.

Most people know Madagascar from the animated films if nothing else but in reality it is a very different place. The island is one of the world's top biodiversity conservation priorities because of a high concentration of unique endemic species and extreme rates of habitat loss.

Deforestation around the coastline is causing problems for the local communities and increasing vulnerability to natural disasters, mainly storms, which come more often as an effect of rapid climate change. At the same time dried out forests and deforestation inland are endangering one of the rarest and most diverse forest ecosystems in the world.

We chose to donate trees to the Eden Reforestation Project which, for more than a decade, works together with many different communities to ensure long term protection and restoration of forests, preserving biodiversity and providing a home to many different species of fauna and flora.

Thank you, our readers, for encouraging us to do more. Even such small steps make a difference and motivate us to do more.

TS subscribers can find the certificate showing the donation that we made on your behalf together in your email together with this issue.



by Bradford Zak

WATER AND CONFLICTS

BY RIMA P.

Water is essential for survival and the amount and quality of it that we have access to affects every aspect of life. Quite often people who use the most fresh water for drinking, cooking, showering, and flushing the toilet, don't consider at all the power that it brings. Access to fresh water and sanitation brings quality of life, empowers, keeps us safe and secure.

The lack of access to fresh water does exactly the opposite.

According to WHO statistics over 780 million people across the world lack access to safe water. About 1 in every 10 people on the planet is getting sick from a lack of, or from drinking dirty, water. Many spend hours each day walking for miles to bring buckets of water home, instead of going to school or working. At the same time, in other parts of the world huge volumes are being wasted by intensive agricultural and unsustainable manufacturing processes.

Still, some people will argue that there must be enough water, the sea level is rising, there are more rainstorms than ever, etc. So how can there be a lack of water, where is the problem? The problem is the lack of drinkable fresh groundwater.

The United Nations is predicting that already by 2030 there will be a global shortfall of fresh water, and quite honestly they have good reason. Even if the amount of clean accessible water was not changing so much, the rapidly increasing world population means that we consume more all the time, but the amount of unpolluted and accessible water is changing too.

Around two thirds of ground water in the world is consumed by agriculture (in this article, we won't go deeper into the effects of massive unsustainable agriculture) and basically the rest is supplied to the urban areas. Some places like Mexico City, parts of Shanghai, Beijing, and areas of California are already experiencing soil collapse because of groundwater depletion.

R. Damania, a lead economist at the World Bank warns: **„Without sustainable groundwater reserves global security is in danger. Economic growth will decline and the food price will spike, raising the risk of violent conflicts and waves of large migration.”**

Oh yes, water conflicts...

Throughout history mankind has had many conflicts over water, the lack of this precious resource, and one group trying to control or cut off the supply to others. Let's look at a couple of them:

- *In 537 AD, the Goths cut Rome's aqueducts. As the barbarian tribes invaded the Roman Empire, the Goths cut off the most important aqueduct carrying water in to Rome and successfully besieged the*

capital city.

- *More recently, in 2004 a drought started in Ethiopia which lasted for three years. It led to the "War of the Well", violent actions over ownership of land and the water wells they contain, in which 250 people were killed.*
- *Nigeria, 2014, more than 1000 were killed, as farmers and herders fought over water shortages.*
- *Internal conflict in Yemen in 2016 meant around 20 million people had no access to clean water.*

The list goes on and on and nothing seems to change. Humans are willing to go to war over comparatively meaningless things, so of course they will fight over the one thing on the planet that nothing and nobody can live without. **There are many different 'reasons' for conflicts over water. They can be political, economic, to change the balance of power between regions, countries, communities.**

Over 200 rivers and many more basins are shared by two or more countries, and there are tensions and disagreements over ownership in all corners of the world that could, and sometimes do, escalate into bigger conflicts: The Colorado River between Mexico and the USA, The River Zambezi - between Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, The River Nile - between Ethiopia and Egypt, and many more.

"Over 200 rivers and many more basins are shared by two or more countries, and there are tensions and disagreements over ownership in all corners of the world that could, and sometimes do, escalate into bigger conflicts"

Issues that are being brought about by climate change are making these situations more volatile. Weather changes, global warming, deforestation, droughts, the danger to food production and energy generation. Water is very simply needed for survival.

Is there a good bit?

Addressing freshwater scarcity globally, just like addressing climate change, requires a multifaceted approach. Additionally, because the two issues are intricately connected, addressing freshwater scarcity will require a concerted effort to mitigate climate change.

Scientists can see one bright side, well it is hardly a bright side but it's the best we have – we do have some time. Depletion of ground water is a slow speed crisis. So, we still have time to develop technologies, strategies and approaches to deal with it.

Developing countries are already using some technology based solutions, like drilling deeper, using different manufacturing approaches which reduce water use, less wasteful agriculture, and new ways of reusing grey water.



River Zambezi by HK

The fight against climate change and global warming is directly interconnected with water poverty.

It is a battle that can be won, if we combine all of the knowledge and strategies that we have then there is a real light at the end of the tunnel. We have to fight in the areas where the biggest struggles are, we have to ensure the most basic of things, the issues that cause people across the world to face the consequences and die every minute. We need to secure access to clean water for everyone in the world.

We need to fight, not against but for each other, to organise the water security of everyone, and to mitigate the effects of climate change that are putting it more in danger than ever.

THE BITCOIN PROBLEM

BY JOHN P.

Neither Tesla or Bitcoin are ever too far from the news headlines but in February 2021 they made them together as the electric car maker bought \$1.5 billion of the cryptocurrency.

It's pushed the value of bitcoin, which was already going rapidly upwards, to a new all time high.



by Pierre Borthiry

You might not notice any immediate problem with this, especially if you have a few bitcoin of your own, but if you take a look a little bit deeper at the sustainability cost of bitcoin and the idea that Tesla is a company that makes sustainable electric cars and solar roofs then the issue starts to become clearer.

Most people don't think at all about where bitcoins come from, but the reality is that they do have a cost, and that they are very far from eco-friendly.

I'm not going to go too deeply into the blockchain and the process of 'mining' new bitcoin, the checks and balances involved, or the complex maths puzzles and huge amounts of processing power involved, partially because it's not important to the point I want to make, and partially because I am not an expert at all.

What we do need to look at is how much power is used every year by bitcoin mining and transactions, and it is immense. I'm going to throw this out there as a few statistics and comparisons...

"According to Digiconomist, Bitcoin produces 39.65 megatons of CO2 annually, which is about equal to New Zealand, using 77.78 TWh of electricity, which is about the same as Chile."

According to Digiconomist, Bitcoin produces 39.65 megatons of CO2 annually, which is about equal to New Zealand, using 77.78 TWh of electricity, which is about the same as Chile. Those might be conservative estimates though, researchers at Cambridge University put the power

consumption figure at 110.53 TWh, just a little more than the annual energy consumption of the Netherlands, or about 0.5% of the total globally.

Whichever of those figures is correct or whether it is somewhere in the middle, that's an incredible amount of energy, or an "unfathomable amount" if you would like to quote Charles Hoskinson, co-founder of Ethereum. Having created the world's second most valuable digital currency, he is biased, but it is also true that Ether and most other cryptocurrencies do use a lot less power than Bitcoin does.

Bitcoin enthusiasts present the argument that focusing on the environmental impact is missing the point, and that using massive amounts of energy is not really bad, that we just need to change how that power is generated. It's almost a convincing argument but not quite. The reality is that most bitcoin miners are making very little effort to ensure that the vast amount of power they consume comes from renewable source, many of the biggest bitcoin mining facilities are based in China, a country that is still very heavily reliant on coal as a source of electricity generation.

The problem extends beyond just mining and into the way that bitcoin is used and the computational cost of each transaction, Bitcoin is much more a way of storing funds than an efficient payment solution. Coming back to Tesla, their updated investment policy states that they want to invest in "reserve assets such as digital currencies, gold bullion or gold exchange-traded funds". Once it does come time for anyone to spend it though, **Digiconomist estimates that the energy footprint of just one bitcoin transaction is about the same as 453,000 transactions made using Visa.**

The demand for Bitcoin, and along with it the amount of power that is needed to mine and maintain is only going in one direction at the moment, and the system underpinning Bitcoin will never be changed at this point, so it is never going to be more energy efficient. Changing the way that power is generated is the only option to improve the environmental footprint and that's just not happening right now.

The head of IT at Greenpeace UK, Andrew Hatton, sums it up with one simple observation, that **"we're powering 21st century technology with 19th century energy sources."** He goes on to say that **"as online services become bigger and more complex, the demand for computing power is bound to go up over the next few years, and that will require more energy. The problem is that only about a fifth of the electricity used in the world's data centres comes from renewable sources, and that's not good enough."**

There is no doubt that he's right, it's not enough and we should be aiming for all of the world's data centres to be fully powered by renewable energy but reducing the amount of that energy that is needed would also hardly be a bad thing. I know that Bitcoin isn't going away but it's hard to ethically justify investing in a cryptocurrency that is as power consuming as a country.



by GREENPEACE UK

2020 DOESN'T SOLVE THE CO2 PROBLEM

BY RIMA P.

Carbon dioxide, CO₂, emissions, these are the first words that spring into most people's minds whenever the topic of climate change comes up.

Maybe that's how it should be. It oversimplifies things of course, there are other greenhouse gases that contribute to our rapidly warming atmosphere. There is deforestation, and the death of coral, all of these are also huge issues, but solving them will be meaningless if we don't do something about all that CO₂.



by Markus Spiske

According to the UN, we need to cut global emissions by about 8% each year up to 2030 to keep global warming below 2°C. It should be encouraging to note that 2020 was the first year since World War II when the CO₂ emissions went down. The Covid-19 pandemic helped the emissions numbers to drop last year, but it is just a one time event and I'm sure we all want to avoid it again in the future.

As great as this temporary drop in emissions might have been, the pandemic drastically affected economies and soon we will face the 'reopening' of many industries that have been partially on hold. In some places things hardly stopped at all, and manufacturing in China went on almost unabated, on a massive scale and still run almost exclusively using fossil fuels.

Some people will hail the fact that there were less planes in the sky and say that will have had a massive impact, but did you know that air transport actually made up only about 2.5% of the total CO₂ emitted globally in 2018 (we still don't have the data for 2020). Maybe it still sounds like a lot, but aviation makes up just 12% of the total transportation emissions, what about the other 88%?

By the way, as you are reading this digital text, spare a thought for the fact that the internet creates a similar amount of CO₂ annually as the air travel industry, and as millions more people worked and studied from home during the last year, these emissions will have gone up.

"Maybe it still sounds like a lot, but aviation makes up just 12% of the total transportation emissions, what about the other 88%?"

Glen Peters, a research director of the International Climate Research project in Norway and a member of the Global Carbon Project, has this to say:

"The climate system is driven by the total amount of CO₂ put in the atmosphere over centuries. Even though emissions fell in 2020, they were still around the same levels as in 2012, and the

drop is insignificant in comparison with the total amount of CO2 emitted over the past centuries. Global warming stops when emissions get to around zero, and Covid-19 has not changed that."

There is no doubt that pandemic restrictions caused drops in the amount of fossil fuels used for both electricity generation and transportation, by 11% in the EU, 12% in the USA and 1.7% in China, according to research from the University of East Anglia, the University of Exeter, and the Global Carbon Project. The question is if these reductions are sustainable or if the numbers are going to bounce back up to the same or higher levels as industry cranks into overdrive to catch up on missed profits.

The big question is how do we capitalise on this downward trend and keep it going in the right direction?

Maybe we shouldn't just focus on the level of damage that each individual sector of industry and each country does, maybe it doesn't help so much to demonize some industries (like air travel) and put others up on a winner's podium. We need to find bigger overarching solutions, ways to work together to solve the problem or at least to start to stop emissions accelerating again.



by Patric Hendry

It doesn't matter whether we are talking about

individuals, government, big businesses, small businesses, or any other kind of organisation, we all are responsible for both our own and the collective CO2 footprint. A huge shift is needed, it is not enough to make emissions neutral. We need to go positive and global, take responsibility and make changes.

Let's look at one of the countries that could be called out as a big part of the problem – China. They have a massive manufacturing industry and very little of it is powered by renewable energy. We have absolutely no control over what kind of power these factories consume, but we do have the choice to stop buying the cheap and unsustainable goods that they produce.

Even manufacturing businesses that don't care at all about their environmental footprint care about sales and profits, and if they see that those things are dropping with the indication that a change to more sustainable and ethical production would turn things around then of course they will go in that direction.

Manufacturing isn't the only problem; electricity generation, transportation, agriculture, land and forest management, the

"We have absolutely no control over what kind of power these factories consume, but we do have the choice to stop buying the cheap and unsustainable goods that they produce."

construction industry, commercial offices and residential properties all have their parts to play as well. We need to be aware of where every product and service that we consume comes from and how sustainable it is, and we need to look at the small print. Even a lot of self-proclaimed eco-friendly industry is actually still far away from being part of the circular economy or as green as it could be.

So, we need to be aware that even this year of global lockdown was only a tiny step in the right direction for carbon emissions, and we also need to remember why we have a problem with CO2 in the first place.

There is nothing wrong with Carbon dioxide in itself, we need it, and the plants we share the planet with need it. The problem is simply with the sheer amount of it that is emitted unnaturally due to human activities. We are upsetting the natural balance of the atmosphere, forming an invisible layer that traps heat and doesn't let it dissipate as normal – the 'greenhouse effect', and if you have ever spent much time gardening then you'll surely agree that living in a greenhouse is far from a fun idea.



by Jonathan Duran

ETHICAL BANKING

BY JOHN P.

This article is not overly long and doesn't dive too deeply, but it has taken me far longer to write than anything else that I've contributed to TS so far.

This is a topic that I don't know too well and I found myself sitting at my desk with a huge number of tabs full of statistics open, many of them years out of date, and

many others completely contradicting each other. So, the first point that I want to make is that negotiating the world of ethical banking and finding out exactly where your bank invests your money is a murky and unclear business.

The basic issue is simple and clear. Historically banks have invested money in businesses that they could be pretty sure would make them profits, with very little concern for any other factors, including the ethics of the companies they were investing in, or the environmental sustainability of whatever they produce or sell.

In 2020 for example, Barclays was the fifth largest, and HSBC the thirteenth largest, funders of the fossil fuel industry worldwide.

According to Banktrack, the 33 global banks that were the focus of their 2018 'Banking on Climate Change' report financed fossil fuels with \$1.9 trillion between the Paris Agreement being signed in 2016 and the report coming out two years later, with the amount invested increasing

each year. I don't have very accurate figures for the last couple of years, but it seems that this number is still on an upwards trend, mostly from American and Chinese banks.

Those figures concentrate on the fossil fuel industry but there are plenty of other areas of concern, both environmental and ethical, like the amount consumer banks invest in the tobacco industry, or in weapons companies. **An ICAN study claims that in 2019 German banks alone invested \$11,758 billion in the nuclear weapons industry.**

It raises the very real possibility that while you are using your debit card to buy organic vegetables, bamboo toilet paper and renewable energy, the money that is sitting in your savings account could very well be busy financing fracking and new coal power stations.

"An ICAN study claims that in 2019 German banks alone invested \$11,758 billion in the nuclear weapons industry."

When we look at the vast sums of money that banks have at their disposal and are spending on these very questionable industries, then we can also imagine how much good it could do if it was instead invested in ethical and environmentally sustainable industries and green tech companies.

The questions that follow on from this knowledge are equally simple and clear. Are there more ethical and planet friendly banks out there, how do we find them, and how real are their claims?

The good news is that yes, there definitely are better options but, like with everything in the banking world, it's not all so transparent. Of course those that have a better ethical investment policy are likely to shout louder about it than those have a terrible one, but you still have to hunt a bit.

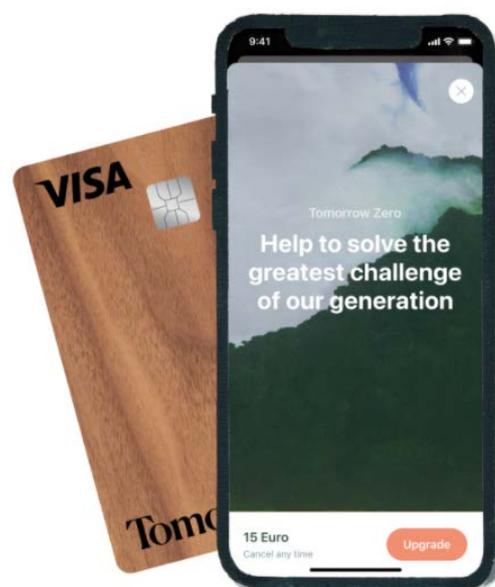
I started out with the thought that any business which has managed to attain and keep certification as a B Corporation is a safe bet to be ethical and sustainable. So, I set out on a hunt for banks that are B corps. I found about 40 of them, surprisingly few in Europe and a surprisingly high number in Australia.

Next I took a look at the Global Alliance for Banking on Values, which is an independent network of banks and banking cooperatives around the world with a shared mission to "use finance to deliver sustainable economic, social and environmental development".

Taking a closer look through all of the banks on those two lists did manage to restore my faith a bit in the fact that there really are ethical banks out there, who are clear and transparent about where they invest the money that they hold for you, and that some of them are actually doing quite a lot of good with those investments. For example:

The Dutch bank.

As an example, since 1980, the Dutch bank Triodos seems to be setting a kind of gold standard for ethical banking with an amazing level of information and clarity about what they are doing with their customers money, they publish details of every organisation that they lend money to or invest in. Their sustainability



by Tomorrow.one

credentials run deep, also including things like biodegradable debit and credit cards.

The German bank.

The Germany based online bank Tomorrow are another interesting option, they are transparent about their sustainable investments and projects they support, but also offer their own unique benefits. They have a free current account which already offers a climate contribution protecting 1m2 of rainforest for every euro spent with your bank card, and also a paid 'Zero' account which goes further and that they claim is the first climate-neutral bank account in the world, where they offset 11.3 tons of CO2 per account every year.

Maybe it is time that we all took a look at where our current banks are investing our money, and if that happens to be in promoting the exploitation of fossil fuels or funding the development of weapons of mass destruction, then maybe it's time to switch to a more ethical alternative.

A HERB NURSERY IN YOUR HOME

SMALL STEPS - BIG CHANGES BY EGLE M.

Spring is almost here! Can you feel the heat from the sun warming you up more and more? Do you sense that special scent of spring in the air when you go outside?



by Egle M.

I can already feel it all – the spring is definitely coming!

As winter draws to a close, all of nature; plants, animals, and people are preparing for the earth to wake up. Some people are planting seedlings or sowing seeds at home that will later be transplanted to greenhouses or outdoor beds in a few months, while others will continue to grow them indoors.

In this issue, I want to share a little idea with you of something that we can all grow easily at home, even living in an apartment and not having our own garden or greenhouse.

It's a small herb garden on your kitchen windowsill.

It is really very simple, all you will need is one big pot and a little soil, large enough that you can plant five or six different kinds of seeds in it. Maybe more or less depending on your space and the herbs that you like. I will share my past experiments from the last year, I grew six herbs in my home garden; dill, basil, rosemary, marjoram, thyme, and parsley.

This might be easy and quick but it's also a great little project that not only brings some life and colour into your kitchen, but also lets you enjoy fresh herbs every time that you are cooking at home. Why use tasteless dried herbs or buy overpriced fresh ones in the supermarket, what could be better or fresher than seasoning your food using herbs that are picked straight from the plant that is growing on your kitchen windowsill?

I invite you to take a look at my herb garden photos from last year and share your thoughts about what herbs you grow and use in your kitchen?



by Egle M.

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF TOURISM IN ALASKA

BY SUSANNA SHANKAR

After extensive traveling and living on two different continents, I'm asked one question, "Where's your favorite place you've ever visited?" I list my home state, Alaska, without skipping a beat.

Alaska is one of the most breathtaking places I've ever visited. North America's tallest mountain dominates the skyline, and nature and humans thrive together with healthy ecosystems. As beautiful as my home is, it is also at the forefront of climate change. Coastal villagers migrate inland as houses erode into the ocean. Glaciers melt, triggering tsunamis and threatening water security.



by Susanna Shankar of Curiosity Saves.

Alaska is a place I urge everyone to visit once in their lifetime. Seeing this vast landscape and the delicate balance of nature firsthand is an eye-opening experience. Working in the tourism industry, I was always thrilled when my guests departed with an appreciation for nature, environmental awareness, and an understanding of the importance of conservation. **With the rise of urbanization, many lack the connection to nature that motivates us to engage in sustainable behaviors. One visit to Alaska can restore that connection. One trip to Alaska, and you'll understand why protecting nature is essential. You'll take those lessons home with you and bring them with you everywhere.**

However, one visit can threaten that connection because how you visit Alaska matters.

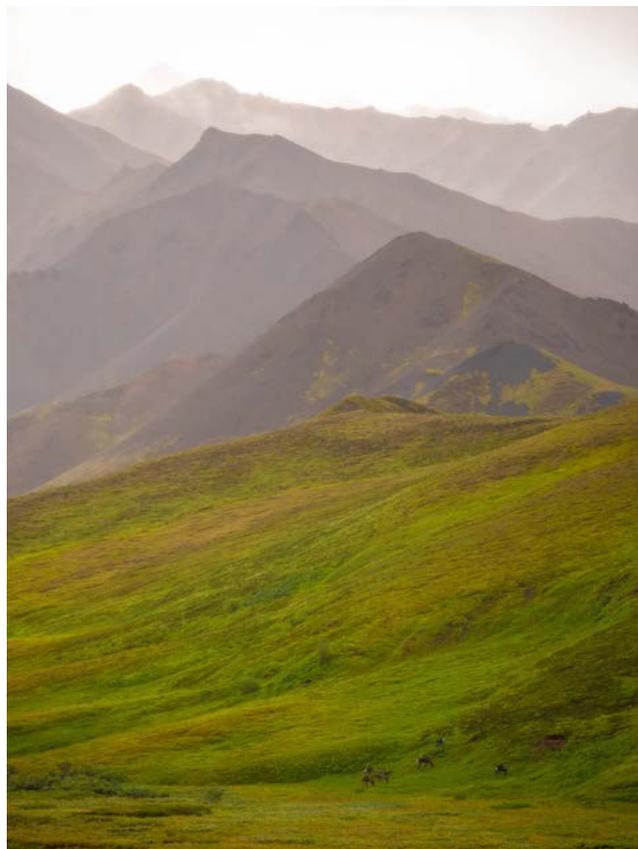
Travel in Alaska is transformative but complex. On the one hand, tourism provides valuable jobs and income to many residents. On the other hand, the tourism industry contributes to air and water pollution, disrupts wildlife, displaces Indigenous peoples, and makes life for locals stressful. I'll share three ways in which the tourism industry is problematic in Alaska and finish with some actionable steps you can implement for future travels.

Mass Overtourism

Alaska is considered a remote and wild destination for many. Planning a trip can be overwhelming. For this reason, many people choose to opt for a stress-free all-inclusive cruise. Eating an endless buffet of crab legs cruising past glaciers and hopping off at coastal villages sounds wonderful, right? It sounds so great that 58% of tourists visit Alaska on a cruise ship. **That means that 2.2 million visitors travel to Alaska in just four months, descending on towns with populations in the hundreds for just a day before sailing away.**

Imagine living in a small community-minded town. One day a cruise ship docks, and thousands of people disembark, making it difficult to drive to work, take a walk in the park, or breathe due to increased air pollution. Rushing through, tourists fail to see the meaning of your home's natural beauty or support you economically. They are unable to learn about your culture. Slowly over time, they may simply become more of a burden than a chance for a cultural connection.

It is a blessing and a curse as you begin to rely on these travelers for money. Still, you lose the intimacy and connection with nature that makes your home so unique, and visitors no longer experience the region's authenticity.



by Susanna Shankar of Curiosity Saves.

Tourism Leakage

You might rely on tourism for income, but are you making as much money as you could be, or are the cruise ships taking most of the profits? Tourism leakage is when money leaks out of a destination ending up in another country's pockets or a multi-national company. **At face value, the cruise industry brings 4.5 billion dollars to the Alaskan economy. That *almost sounds like it's worth the environmental distress caused by the industry (I kid). The reality is very different. For every \$1.00 spent in Skagway, Alaska, only \$0.10 remains in the local economy. Where does the rest go? Well, a large portion leaks out to multinational cruise companies incorporated in Panama where they don't pay US taxes, and they don't hire local Alaskans.**

"Mass tourism happens in the short summer months, so many Alaskans don't find tourism jobs appealing. They prefer to find stable year-round employment with benefits."

Mass tourism happens in the short summer months, so many Alaskans don't find tourism jobs appealing. They prefer to find stable year-round employment with benefits. That means most people working in the tourism industry might be from out of state or another country. They work long, hard hours during the summer before leaving for the winter. Rather than spending their earnings in Alaska, the money leaks out to where they spend their winters.

Environmental Problems

Cruise ships bring a long list of environmental violations. For years, cruise ships have been dumping grey and black water, spreading invasive species, dumping toxic waste in small community landfills, and adding pollution to the air. While tourism is vital to Alaska, many destinations are left short-changed without the income to mitigate and adapt to tourism's environmental implications.

Some small towns push back against the cruise ships, attempting to enforce policies to reduce air and water pollution. Haines proposed legislation to prevent mass-overtourism seeking to cap cruise ship capacity. A significant cruise company declared they would no longer dock in Haines, taking their tourism dollars away from the small port town within days. Indigenous Alaskans denied subsistence access to Glacier Bay watched boatloads of tourists polluting the water and enjoying more land rights.

"For years, cruise ships have been dumping grey and black water, spreading invasive species, dumping toxic waste in small community landfills, and adding pollution to the air."

Many applaud the introduction of tourism to Southeast Alaska and its success in revitalizing livelihood in lieu of the collapse of the Tongass National Forest's logging industry. Other locals wonder if tourism is causing just as much environmental damage.

Actionable Things to Consider

Those that visit Alaska choosing to do so at a slower pace, supporting local businesses, seeing outside the busy summer season leave knowing they not only bettered themselves but their destination.

Diffuse Mass-Tourism

The simple act of avoiding mass tourism in Alaska means some businesses can employ locals and stay open year-round. In the town of Talkeetna, Denali Brewery, the town's largest employer, stays open year-round. They are only able to remain open year-round if both locals and tourists visit in winter. Visiting during peak season is ok too, but it is important to get off the beaten track and visit small towns that aren't on the cruise itinerary to infuse money directly into the local economy.



by Susanna Shankar of Curiosity Saves.

If everyone is visiting on a cruise ship, challenge yourself to explore the world authentically, seeking meaningful experiences that better leave you and your destination than when you arrived. Stay longer, let nature have a break from thousands of feet, explore unknown places, and visit at a time no one else does.

Travel to Learn About the Environment

Many people travel to learn to try new foods, learn new languages, experience new cultures. I travel to learn about the environment. When you visit Alaska, you should actively seek out educational experiences to learn about the impacts of climate

change, the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems, and how locals approach sustainability as a lifestyle. Many Alaskans have a profound connection to nature. While it might seem the oil industry's presence contradicts that value, Alaskans increasingly understand the importance of protecting nature to safeguard our very way of life and identity. **Every culture connects with nature differently, and it's important to open ourselves to embrace global sustainability so we can enjoy our planet's biodiversity a little longer.**



by Let's do it World!

national and regional level. From one small Baltic nation, the network is now in 180 countries.

But let's go back.

The year was 2008, and the third of May was a bit different than usual in Estonia. Around 50,000 Estonians were out in the streets, forests, and parks taking part in the first Let's Do It event. With the power of great networking and media it encouraged the other Baltic States; Lithuania, and Latvia, to hold the same event the next year. 250,000 people took part with increasing numbers each year since then making organized cleaning actions!

In 2010 Portugal and Slovenia already joined with hundreds of thousands more people taking part in the events. By 2011 there were 16 countries involved, not just from Europe, but also India, Cambodia, Russia, and Brazil.

The Network is growing.

Spring and Summer of 2012 had a series of cleanup actions and events on all continents, involving millions of volunteers from 96 countries. Slovenia and Portugal played a part in this by bringing together initiators and supporters, sharing their experiences and introducing the World Cleanup 2012.

As I mentioned before, today the network is 180 countries.

LET'S DO IT WORLD!

A SUCCESS STORY BY RIMA P.

This time our success story started way back in 2008, in one of the small Baltic States – Estonia. This is the story of how a good idea can grow, it does not matter where it started, it can lead into a successful initiative worldwide involving 180 countries. So, let's look at **Let's Do It World** and the impact it has already made.

Shortly, Let's Do it World started in Estonia over 10 years ago and now it is a global civic organisation which is mobilising people around the globe to join in with clean up events on a local,

World Cleanup Day

Working together hand in hand to achieve the bigger goal and to make an impact is easier than alone. The global solid waste problem needs a big and powerful movement to make a real difference. Even if all the world would change our habits right now and would not produce any new waste, we still need to deal with the stuff we created before.

World Cleanup Day is an annual global social action program which aims to fight against waste on the 3rd Saturday of September annually.

The aim is not just to clean, but to raise awareness of the mismanaged waste crisis by mobilising everyone to take action. Individuals, governments, corporations and organisations.

The first World Cleanup Day was in 2018, and there were around 15 million people from 158 countries involved. As a result of COVID-19, last year we weren't holding massive events but according to the statistics in 2019 over 21 million participants took part in World Cleanup Day.

"The first World Cleanup Day was in 2018, and there were around 15 million people from 158 countries involved. According to the statistics in 2019 over 21 million participants took part in World Cleanup Day."

Digital Cleanup Day

We have waste not just around us in the landfills, forests, and streets, but a massive amount in the digital world as well which is trashed. Each of us store unnecessary files on our computers, tablets, smart phones, and in data centres. Just by a simple action – deleting unneeded files, each person is making a positive impact. Extending the life of our tools and saving a huge amount of CO2. Digital Cleanup Day is a new initiative by Let's Do It World.

The Let's Do It Foundation

Time passes and this one event in Estonia has grown into the biggest cleaning action in the world. In 2018, the coordination of the project was handed over to the Let's Do It World NGO. The Keep It plan was created for the global community and the Let's Do It Foundation now focuses on engaging communities to keep it. This is not just a one-day action anymore, it is much bigger, spreading knowledge and education. The organisation is developing educational programs for sustainable



by Let's do it World!

development, giving consultations about the most sustainable resource management systems, and implementing innovative technology for a sustainable world.

People in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are involved at all levels; schools, communities, private businesses, NGOs, and governmental institutions, are mapping places and concentrating on the most urgent areas to clean up.

It takes time and lots of effort to implement and to share the good experiences and knowledge. There is no doubt Europe is a leader comparing with other continents, but it is still far away from perfect. Education, encouraging habits at a young age, and uniting people to a common goal is the way to go. We need this kind of good example and success stories to show that we can and to empower people.

The next World Cleanup Day is 18 September 2021, get ready!

TOURISM DECLARES A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WE ASKED... BOB GARNER.

We wrote a lot about sustainable travel in the last issue of TS, but it's a huge and important topic and we aren't ashamed to write about it again a little bit this month.

Bob Garner, together with his husband Ian, owns and runs Casal dei Fichi, six luxurious and environmentally friendly holiday apartments in Le Marche, Italy.

The lengths Bob and Ian go to in making every aspect of holiday renting with them as sustainable as they can are pretty great, so we asked Bob to tell us a bit about one of the organisations they are a member of: Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency.

Unless you live as a hermit with no access to the outside world you cannot have failed to be aware of the climate emergency that we all face. In response governments, states, regions, businesses and diverse sections of civic society have declared a climate emergency. **The travel industry, wonderful as it is, contributes to the problem with tourism accounting for approximately 7% of global greenhouse gasses. The science says that globally we need to half our emissions by 2030. This applies to tourism too.**

What is the tourism industry doing?

Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency is a global community of hundreds of travel related businesses and individuals who have declared a climate emergency and are coming together to find common solutions. **Tourism Declares seeks to enable all sectors of the travel industry**



**TOURISM DECLARES
CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

to acknowledge their responsibilities and develop appropriate climate action plans, reducing carbon emissions in line with what science says is needed. So ultimately making your next trip much more eco-friendly.

Why is tourism involved?

Tourism is a massive part of the global economy employing tens of millions of people. In 2019 it generated approximately \$2.9 trillion to global GDP. These numbers have been rising fast each year and are set to continue to escalate.

It is difficult to define the tourism sector, as unlike with other industries, there is not one clear product. It incorporates many industries, including lodging, transport, attractions, travel companies, entertainment, catering and many ancillary functions such as promotion, publicity, marketing & media.

"So, the travel and tourism sector needs to more or less halve its carbon impact by 2030. This can only be achieved if we all work together, sharing learnings, supporting each other and advocating for the innovation needed. This is at the heart of Tourism Declares A Climate Emergency."

Tourism businesses are declaring because they want to be part of the solution which starts with acknowledging both the climate emergency and the need to cut emissions, together with a commitment to take action.

Tourism is changing fast and so are the expectations of travelers. They too are learning about the climate crisis and are thinking about how to make their next holiday a little greener.

In Booking.com's traveller survey for 2021 they found that 69% of travellers expect the travel industry to offer more sustainable travel options.

So, the travel and tourism sector needs to more or less halve its carbon impact by 2030. This can only be achieved if we all work together, sharing learnings, supporting each other and advocating for the innovation needed. This is at the heart of Tourism Declares A Climate Emergency.

The importance of getting involved

At Casal dei Fichi we are participating because we want to publicly state our commitment to the issue and implement workable solutions. We know there is increasing public awareness of the climate emergency and a growing customer demand for a solutions-led approach from hosts like us.

We have found that being a member of Tourism Declares has enabled us to double down on what our business can easily achieve and to learn from others facing similar challenges to us.

Good hosts know to provide an excellent guest experience from the accommodation to the service. But the truly forward thinking host, like all other sectors of our industry, are increasingly conscious that they will have to be integral to solutions on climate change. Implementing eco-friendly initiatives and considering our carbon footprint is no longer an optional extra; it is a tangible, practical demonstration of our role in creating workable solutions that the traveller now expects and the planet needs.



by Bob Garner at Casal dei Fichi

providers still haven't addressed this issue. So use your purchasing power wisely, seek out the lodging that is trying to make an eco difference.

Assess whether your preferred place to stay has taken some eco steps beyond recycling and bland statements of green intentions (greenwashing). Look for specific and wide ranging steps that they have taken relating to energy, water, supporting nature etc. See if they have been certified as eco by any independent agency. Have they won any awards or received any press coverage about their efforts? Maybe they are even a member of Tourism Declares A Climate Emergency!

What can you do?

When you plan your next trip give some thought to how you can make it as environmentally friendly as possible. This includes how you travel, how long, where you stay and what you do when you get there. Do a bit of research, there are lots of articles in the media giving the traveller tips on what to do and what not to do. My expertise is in hosting so I know that every host has many available options to make your stay more

environmentally friendly, yet many

RECOMMENDATIONS

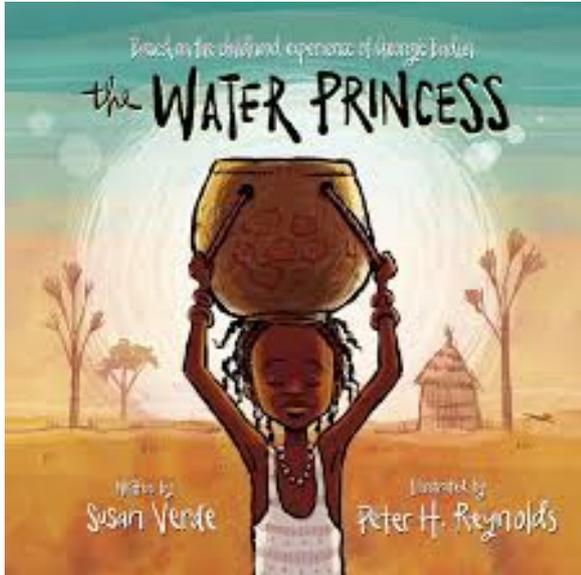
BOOK

No one is too small to make a difference by Greta Thunberg

By now everyone knows who Greta Thunberg is, the young girl who brought millions of young people to the streets to fight for our planet. This climate activist chose to advocate and protest against climate change and inspired a global movement.

Along the way she has earned a Nobel Prize nomination and showed us all that a simple small step like skipping school and protesting in the street can encourage real change. This book is a collection of some of Greta's great speeches that have made history around the world.





BOOK FOR KIDS

The water princess by Susan Verde

Anyone who knows about child development knows how important the knowledge and skills gained in early childhood are for the adolescent. So this book by Susan Verde is a great material to learn important lessons about the world.

Based on model Georgie Badier's childhood, "The Water Princess" follows a young girl who wants to bring potable drinking water to her West African community.

Very often in the rural areas of many African countries people need to walk for miles to get clean water, and in most cases this task falls to the women and girls of the family.

Since Gie Gie cannot bring water closer or make it cleaner, the book tells how every morning she goes to bring water from the well. Like most African ladies instead of a crown, this princess carries a heavy pot of water on her head.



A FILM

The E-Waste Tragedy

This 2014 film is about the huge global issue of electronic waste, highlights the reality that even the most developed countries with great green initiatives and waste recycling programs in place struggle with very real e-waste problems.

Every year, these developed nations throw away around 50

million metric tons of electrical and electronic waste; computers, TVs, mobile phones and domestic appliances.

This film asks if this tide of toxic waste can be stopped. How much longer are we going to ignore the problem? What is actually happening with this kind of waste?

We believe it is a very important topic in these times when we all want access to the best and shiniest new technologies and keep changing devices as soon as new versions appear. Let's be smart and sustainable in our choices.

Did you know? The 21st of March is the International Day Of Forest! Visit one!