

# The Environmental Tribune



YOUR SOURCE FOR CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 1

MARCH 2007

## Corn, It's Not Just For Popping Anymore!



### America's New Oil Field?

<http://www.heftyseed.com/pic-corn-field-big.jpg>

In the ever increasing search for alternative fuel, Americans have finally started looking inwards. While, production and availability is not coast to coast, Ethanol 85 is growing in popularity. Ethanol is a substance derived from corn and other sources and is combined with gasoline. This new fuel burns cleaner and more effectively than current gasoline. Another advantage to in-

creasing usage of Ethanol 85 fuel is our decrease in dependence on foreign energy sources. The Washington Post reports one farmer, David Diedrich, saying, "It's just kind of a dream come true, really, for us. It's using our own resources, renew-

*"It's just kind of a dream come true, really, for us. The economy for the corn growers themselves has just been a huge thing to help support our prices and get demand."*

able resources, to produce energy. It's improving our economy here. The economy for the corn growers themselves has just been a huge thing to help support our prices and get demand." It is also providing farmers with a steadier income because the demand for corn is not only higher, but more consistent.

While the average car an American operates cannot run on Ethanol 85, the production of such vehicles has been increasing since 1993! Nonetheless, it was not until recently that the market received wide-spread interest. Many influ-

ential and well-respected sources have reported stories on Ethanol and its uses such as the New York Times, the Washington Post, and USA Today. With all the buzz around the option, it provides a promising outlook for the future of America's fuels.



## Could One Elephant's DNA Save Another?

A major stories that is making headlines lately is the evidence found in the DNA of ivory. Law enforcers are now trying to crack down on poachers now more than

ever, and they are recruiting science as a tool. The DNA test was developed back in 2004 and can locate the area where the ivory originated between

500-1000km (hypothetically, of course). Armed with this knowledge, police are now able to focus their attention to high (continued on next page)

### Environmental Facts:

- Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil.
- One ton of carbon dioxide that is released in the air can be prevented by replacing every 75 watt light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs.
- Glass produced from recycled glass instead of raw materials reduces related air pollution by 20%, and water pollution by 50%.

Facts from-  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/11353/facts.htm>

### In this issue:

CORN, IT'S NOT JUST FOR POPPING ANYMORE!	C
COULD ONE ELEPHANT'S DNA SAVE ANOTHER?	C
A NEW PRICE ON CLEANER AIR	2
LOW BUDGET CONSERVATION THAT WORKS	2
NOTHING CAN BE CERTAIN, EXCEPT DEATH, TAXES, AND BAG FEES?	3
REPENTANCE FOR THE GUILTY TRAVELER	3
MELTING ICE LEADS TO NEW DISCOVERIES	3
AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...	4
MONTHLY ORGANIZATIONS	4

# The Environmental Tribune

## TRUE FACT

"IN 1961 [UGANDA] HELD 12,000 ELEPHANTS - NUMBERS REDUCED TO 300 BY 1986."

WWW.ELEPHANTCARE.ORG

## (Continued from Cover)

problematic areas where poaching is steeper. One report from the NewScientist.com quotes Sam Wasser, the test developer, saying, "The number of killed elephants was at least 30 to 60 times higher than Zambia indicated." While that is a shocking difference, the new numbers will allow biologists to alter their conservation methods to enhance the population.

This is great news for the dwindling elephant population.



More improvements are being made to the test and

the genetic map of Africa to improve its 80% success rate it currently has. Hopefully with this new strategy, the cost will outweigh the lucrative benefit of poachers and their market.

## A New Price On Cleaner Air

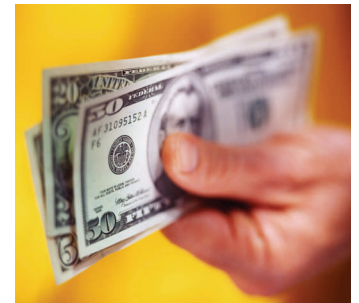
Billionaire Richard Branson, with the advertising aid of Al Gore, has decided to push people to do something about the quality of the Earth's air. They have decided to hold a competition for improvements on the atmosphere; the prize, \$25 million.

In theory they are looking for someone to build a "giant vacuum" for the greenhouse

gases in the atmosphere. Gore and Branson, along with four other judges, will be picking the winning project to donate the money.

While it is encouraging private companies and even countries, across the globe, to get involved improving the environment and become environmentally aware, it is disheartening that people need money as the incen-

tive. Shouldn't cleaner air be enough?



## Low Budget Conservation That Works

Trees, once seen as a nuisance to local farmers in Niger, are now seen as a precious commodity and a source of pride. In order to promote the conservation of trees, they went from being state owned to private property. This gave landowners a new outlook on the plants.

Over the past 30 years, about 7.4 million acres are now covered with trees. This

is not thanks to high, Western budgeting or lots of conservation planning; just a change of heart.

Nonetheless, do not think that there is not an economic benefit for keeping the trees. Farmers have recently begun selling bark, pods, fruit, and branches at market. They are also helping their village's soil and increase groundwater; trees

are a natural anchor.

With the nearly doubled population, over the past 20 years since the conservation started, the trees will be the ones saving the farmers if and when hard times fall upon the nation. Aerial surveys are showing an increase in vegetation each time a survey is done. Amazing how something small, can have such a big change.



## Volume 1, Issue 1

### Nothing Can Be Certain, Except Death, Taxes, and Bag Fees?

Helping improve the environment is important. So why aren't more people doing something? Well, consumers at IKEA no longer can say that they stood by and did nothing.

The company recently announced that they will be charging customers a nickel for every plastic bag needed for their merchandise at check out. Pernille Lopez,

president of IKEA North America, told USA Today, "We really feel the timing is right. It's a small step, but we feel it's good for us as a company, and it reduces our impact on the environment."

While they may be the first to generate publicity on the position, IKEA is not the first. Surplus markets, such as Costco, have been implementing disposable bag

charges since their opening.

Thankfully, patrons are supportive of the cause and are more than happy to have the extra \$0.5 tagged on to their bill. Hopefully this will cut down on national and global plastic bag use. IKEA's main objective is to eventually phase out the disposable bags altogether.



**IKEA is going green, one customer at a time**

Picture courtesy of [www.IKEA.com](http://www.IKEA.com)

### Repentance for the Guilty Traveler

Trying to keep a green mindset is not always the easiest thing. However, there is finally a solution for compensating for our urge to explore the globe.

Travelers now have the option of supporting alternative energy sources to help relieve guilt for their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing "green tags" for under \$25. But



what are green tags? They are renewable energy credits that help support the use of unconventional energy, such as solar and wind power. The benefit, according to the official website ([www.greentagsusa.org](http://www.greentagsusa.org)), is

that "using clean renewable energy is friendly to the environment and reduces emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases."

The Bonneville Environmental Foundation, the creators, also provide you with a way to calculate the amount of Carbon Dioxide your trip emits and how many green tags you will need to buy in order to offset the damage.

**"THERE IS FINALLY  
A SOLUTION FOR  
COMPENSATING  
FOR OUR URGE  
TO EXPLORE THE  
GLOBE"**

### Melting Ice Leads to New Discoveries

While global warming is a current phenomenon with many negative effects on the environment and scientific community, there was finally a "break" in the hard times. Due to a break in, yet another, Antarctic ice shelf, Larsen B, scientists were able to study an entire aquatic ecosystem that had been virtually undisturbed by humans.

The project, supported by Census of Marine Life, proved to find "a host of potential new species along the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge," reports National Geographic.

While the expedition was not only to observe Antarctic life, it was also to develop a constant, if you will, to global warming. By estab-

lishing starting point, it allows scientists to determine the effects, and their intensity, of global warming at the poles where reactions will be the most severe and detrimental.



**Antarctic ice fish with brittle stars**

Photo courtesy of National Geographic Online

## The Environmental Tribune

YOUR SOURCE FOR CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

### And the Oscar Goes to...

The Academy Awards peaked great interest last month when the award for Best Documentary (and another for Best Song, which is less relevant) went to Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. These accomplishments are a monumental feat and is a huge step in the right direction for environmentalists.

While the film is well known among "green" people, the presentation of this award opened the eyes of many who may have been unaware. The best way to get people involved is to get them talking, and this certainly did just that. The obviously larger audience, will in turn produce a more educated civilization and potentially a more concerned community here in America, and even globally.



The driving forces behind the film. (From left to right) Lawrence Bender, Producer; Laurie David, Producer; Al Gore, former Vice President; Lesley Chilcott, Co-Producer; Davis Guggenheim, Director.

<http://www.climatecrisis.net/aboutthefilm/>

The award, however, does not just give the film much needed new advertising, but it provides it with validity. There are many people that believe global warming is not a major, issue, if one at all. The success of an earning Oscar® helps the documen-

tary, and its creators, lay to rest any sly remarks that cynics may have. It is most definitely just as much a win for climate change as it is for the crew.

While the film is not necessarily scientifically groundbreaking, its importance cannot be measured. It grasps the interest of its viewers and sparks the imagination in a way that is easy to comprehend. Gore wonderfully presents the current and future issues of global climate change and the layout is impeccable. It maybe just what this environmentally unaware country needs to ensure the future for generations to come.

### THIS MONTH'S ORGANIZATIONS THAT NEED YOUR HELP...



#### Defenders of Wildlife

This organization is dedicated to the preservation and protection of wild animals and their natural habitats. You can either become a member or donate to a specific project. Please visit them at [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org).



#### Greenpeace

Maybe one of the most well-known environmental organization on a global scale. Contributions made here will benefit the environment and the organisms (including humans) that reside there. Check them out at [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org).



#### Oceans Alive

This is a great educational outlet for anyone. Their team of researchers, scientists, and advocates are constantly working to help protect and find solutions to problems with the marine environment. Donations and other means of support are welcome at [www.oceansalive.org/home.cfm](http://www.oceansalive.org/home.cfm).