



August 2019 Newsletter

Dear ,

Blessed Unrest is upon us!

We are excited to officially announce the release of the [fifth issue](#) of our [Compendium of Scientific and Practical Findings to Address Global Warming](#). The latest issue describes several examples of eco-restoration work from around the world. Check out an excerpt from this issue in this month's newsletter!

Urban farming has taken off in many major cities across the country, with many urban renewal and revitalization projects underway. [ATTRA](#) or the [National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service](#) provides readily accessible sustainable and organic farming information to farmers and ranchers all over the country. Read towards the end of this newsletter to find their new pamphlet *Start a Farm in the City* that includes a neat urban farming story in comic strip form!

And lastly, we have an exciting [event](#) coming up with Walter Jehne, internationally known soil and climate scientist, in Cambridge on Monday, August 26 2019. More information about that can be found in this newsletter and on [Facebook](#).

Have you gotten your daily dose of inspiration yet? We guarantee a wealth of it on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Good news is hard to come by, and we stay motivated by hearing about all the work that is being put into restoring our planet every day.

Three cheers for Restoration!

Manjulika Das, Project Manager

Rewilding for a Cooler Planet



A roadside verge teeming with wildflowers in Rotherham, UK
Photography by Pictorial Meadows

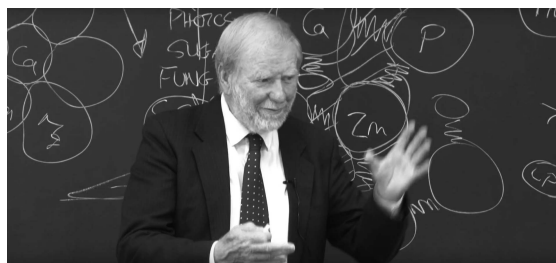
In many parts of the world, native vegetation is returning to large swaths of land. This happens because people abandon their rural landscapes and move to the cities, thus allowing native shrubland

Don't Miss these Events!

Cooling the Climate Mess: Soil, Water, and the Power of Nature

When: 6:30-8:30PM on Monday, August 26 2019

Where: Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge MA



EXCITING NEWS! We are thrilled to present an extraordinary event that will address our most pressing climate problems today with critical nature-based solutions. Come on by if you live in the Greater Boston area. If you don't, be sure to tell everyone you know in the area!

Walter Jehne is an internationally known Australian soil microbiologist and climate scientist. He is passionate about educating farmers, policymakers and others about "the soil carbon sponge" and its crucial role in reversing and mitigating flooding, drought, wildfires, and searing global temperatures. He shows us how we can safely cool the climate and restore essential biodiversity by repairing our disrupted hydrological cycles. We thus return excess carbon to the soils, where it can build a sponge that soaks up water and revives the biosphere!

Sign up on [Facebook](#) or [Meetup](#), or just show up!

More info available on our [website](#).

"Detox Your Yard" Using Plant-based Phytoremediation to Heal your Soil

When: 6-9PM on Sunday, September 15 2019

Where: Cambridge MA



Laura is a master gardener, arborist, horticulturist and naturalist whose work has been featured in magazines and on the Garden Conservancy open garden tour.

and forests to flourish once again. These native species are attracting wolves, brown bears, lynx, and boar. Countries like Spain and the U.K. are already seeing this return in wilderness and biodiversity.

Forest recovery is an essential part of cooling the biosphere, as is the rewilding of smaller spaces, such as front and/or back yards. Depending on the landscape, reforestation can take decades: Spain has gained 96,000 hectares of forest every year from 2000-2015, while the U.K. has made slower progress. Restoring grasslands and native species at home can have significant climate benefits, by drawing down and sequestering carbon.

Many well-clipped and manicured lawns that we see consist of just one or two species of turf grass. Compare this to more than [40 plant species](#) that can thrive in a single square meter of grassland! Techniques to encourage growth of native flora in a backyard include raising one's mower blades, leaving longer gaps between mowings, eliminating fertilizers and pesticides, and leaving yard clippings as patches in the sides and corners to become small wildflower meadows. Setting up garden ponds further helps with carbon sequestration, and provides an oasis for struggling species whose habitats are drying up from climate change.

Urban greening and design are starting to take place in many different cities and neighborhoods. In the UK, roadside verges are being turned into wildflower meadows (pictured above). As Olivia Norfolk, a Lecturer in Conservation Ecology at Anglia Ruskin University says, "The UK road network spans over 246,000 miles – reducing mowing on the grass verges that surround them to just once a year could save money and create thriving habitats for pollinating insects that return on their own each spring."

[Read more here.](#)

Meet John Feldman, Critically Acclaimed Filmmaker and Eco-restoration Thinker



John Feldman has been a film maker for over forty years, and has made a variety of genres of films ranging from independent dramatic feature films and documentaries, to experimental, educational, and business films. His films have won numerous international awards. Currently, John is working on a film about the importance of regenerating life on Earth to address the climate crisis today.

The film is a first-person narration of John's personal discovery of the regeneration of nature and its ability to restore and cool the planet. "Adam Sacks [Executive Director, Bio4Climate] and the Bio4Climate team had an impact on my thinking", says John. "The compendiums have become some kind of a bible to me." He was introduced to Judith D. Schwartz who authored *Cows Save the Planet* and *Water in Plain Sight*, and is a long-time friend of Bio4Climate. She had come to a screening of Feldman's film *Symbiotic Earth*, that details the life and work of the evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis. It was through Bio4Climate that John came to know Walter Jehne, an Australian climate scientist and soil biologist, and Didi Pershouse, an author and board member of the Soil Carbon Coalition. "I contacted Didi and went to a workshop. It was here that I was introduced to regenerative agriculture and saw that it was being thought of as a real solution to the climate crisis."

One of the first points of the documentary is to be optimistic. John feels that people will be most inspired when they realize that the key is not just switching to renewable energy or sequestering carbon, but learning about the varied ways we can change our own lifestyles to make an impact. Everyone can find a way to be involved, but that involves a shift in thinking. "Not only have we been destroying the environment and killing species, we've been destroying ourselves through poor nutrition. Lots of people are worried about food and diet. Lots of people are worried about climate change. These are

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Laura will discuss general concepts of toxicology, what toxic substances may be found in your back yard, how they came to be there, and the role plants can play in cleaning the soil. She will then tell us how to remove toxins from the garden and the food supply using bio-remediation, and what we can do to prevent toxic yard syndrome.

Find more details about this event on our [Meetup](#) page.

"Let's gather around the campfire and restore paradise": Survivors commit to restoring the land in Paradise, California



Photography by Gerard Ungerman

The devastating wildfires (called "Camp Fire") leveled much of Paradise, California in 2018 leaving just [10% of homes standing](#). Matthew Trumm recognized the enormous task of rebuilding the community and land, and founded the Camp Restoration Project. The Project ultimately aims to bring people together in organizing the long-term recovery of Paradise. Over a weekend, attendees convened to take part in activities that provided training in regenerative design and ecological restoration. People engaged in permaculture projects at Pine Ridge School in Magalia, one of the few schools left standing after the wildfires.

Trumm has been inspired by the work of John D. Liu, an ecologist and film maker who documented the ongoing Loess Plateau Watershed Rehabilitation Project along the Yellow River Basin in China. Liu has created Ecosystem Restoration Camps that have helped to restore overly grazed and barren lands in Spain and Mexico. Trumm's project will be the first in the U.S. to apply Liu's principles in wildfire recovery. He was particularly inspired by a phrase that Liu used in several of his restoration videos: "Let's gather around the campfire and restore paradise."

At Pine Ridge School, which one reaches after driving through miles of scorched land and forest, Trumm wants to create a safe space for students. Many displaced students from surrounding schools that were destroyed now attend the school. During the restoration event at the school, campers and other volunteers removed old railings from walkways, rebuilt classroom ramps, dug a drainage ditch, and planted native trees and shrubs and a small garden at the school's entrance.

Koreen Brennan, owner of Grow Permaculture in Brooksville, Florida, and a board member at Permaculture Institute of North America has seen the opportunity and hope that permaculture brings to communities that can be restored after such disasters. She has seen this in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, where she traveled to bring back the community.

"We need to increase our understanding of how we are interconnected with each other and with ecosystems, in order to make better decisions about how and where we live. The result would be resilient communities that are more supportive, and have more abundant natural resources for the foreseeable future."

[Read more here.](#)

Looking to get involved in Urban Farming?

interconnected problems." John believes that if we start treating ourselves better, we can begin to make positive changes in the environment around us, from planting a small garden at home, to making decisions as responsible consumers that would benefit sustainable agriculture.

But there's more to it than just changing one's lifestyle. Some of these changes require a fundamental shift in thinking about the issue.

"I want people to widen their viewpoints, in particular about climate change. Walter Jehne keeps mentioning how the elephant in the room is water. Everybody is focused on carbon emissions, and by focusing on carbon we are missing a huge part of the problem," says John. The film plans to bring a scientific and holistic approach to assessing biodiversity, eco-restoration, and climate. Understanding how the system of life is involved in regulating the climate is critical, and John plans to get this across in the easiest way he can think of.

"This film is not afraid to go into the science. I find myself falling into mechanistic description. I've decided that the solution to that is not to do this at all but to describe cycles. If everything circulates, you just have to follow the cycle. In the film, my plan is to first follow the energy from the sun, to the planet, to the photosynthesis, to being reflected. Follow a drop of the water, talk about how the energy changes."

In bringing about a comprehensive picture of the climate situation, John plans to include a historical perspective as well. "History teaches a lot. We'll talk about the dust bowl, industrial revolution, green revolution and how this was thought of as a way to feed the world." The history of the climate change debate is of interest as well.

The film is planned for release by next July.

Compendium Notes

Here's another excerpt from our [Compendium of Scientific and Practical Findings Supporting Eco-Restoration to Address Global Warming](#). The article below is from our [first issue](#), July 2017, Vol. 1 No. 1 (pp. 35-36):

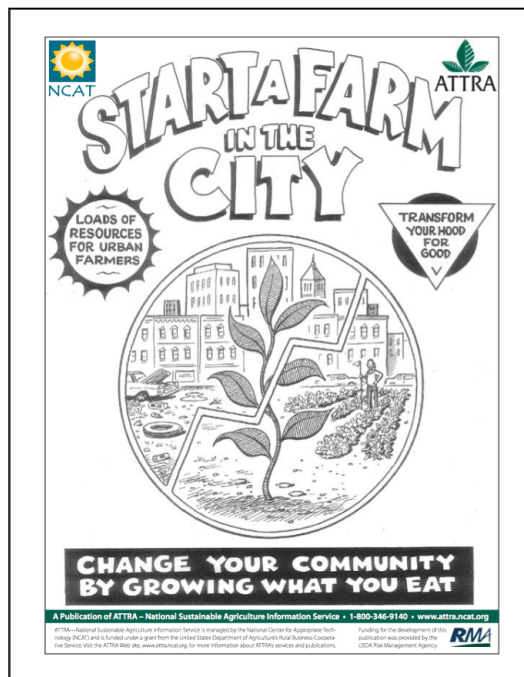
Singh 2007

Rajendra Singh, the "Water Man of India," tells the story of how he helped over 1,000 villages restore water and abundance through the use of ancient, low-technology land management. Providing water for people, farms and animals, such efforts countered the ill effects of industrialization and reversed flight to the cities. Says Singh:

I am neither a scientist, nor a professional water engineer nor a climate change expert. I am a small constructive worker of Gandhi and I mobilize the civil society and the community for action on natural resources management and conservation for rural uplift in India. Here I am recording the impact of the above work on the ecology of 6,500 square km area in Alwar district from 1985-2007. Since 1985, 8,600 small water harvesting talabs [a form of check dam] in 1,068 villages of Alwar district covering 6,500 square km area have been built. This has resulted in the shallow aquifer recharge in groundwater bringing up the water table from about 100-120 meters depth to 3-13 meters at present. The area under single cropping increased from 11 per cent to 70 per cent out of which area under double cropping increased from 3 per cent to 50 per cent bringing prosperity to the farmers. The forest cover, which used to be around 7 per cent increased to 40 per cent through agro-forestry and social forestry, providing sufficient fuel wood and sequestering carbon from atmosphere [Singh 2007: 5].

A dramatic example of how large restoration efforts are built from small, local efforts. In the ten years since this paper, Tarun Bhagat Sangh has continued to expand its work.

Singh, Rajendra, 2007, Community Driven Approach for Artificial Recharge –TBS Experience, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Tarun Ashram, Bhikampur, District Alwar, Rajasthan, India. An ancient technology is helping India's "water man" save thousands of parched villages, <https://qz.com/367875/an-ancient-technology-is-helping-indias-water-man-save-thousands-of-parched-villages/>; and Rajendra Singh -



Take a look at ATTRA's newest publication on how to start a farm in your very own neighborhood!

In addition to community gardens and farmers' markets, urban agriculture involves land use decisions, nutritious meals at schools, employment and job training, food processing and delivery, the creation of clean green working spaces in urban areas, citywide systems of composting waste, and much more. Many of the new urban gardeners grow tons of food on small plots, provisioning farmers' markets, restaurants, food banks, and community supported agriculture share boxes.

Urban agriculture has the potential to relieve food insecurity, make neighborhoods safer, and improve regional economies.

Check out the publication [here](#).

We Provide Solutions!

Check out our [Solutions page](#) to find out how you can help! Be it through individual or collaborative action, there are a number of ways we can all get involved.



Last but not Least. . .

You're concerned about the current state of the Earth, and we are working for you, our young people, and the diverse web of life we all rely on.

Not to put too fine a point on it, we just want to say that we're a small non-profit doing BIG things.

Your support and involvement are very important! Please be sure to . . .

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The water man of India wins 2015 Stockholm Water Prize,
<http://www.siwi.org/prizes/stockholmwaterprize/laureates/2015-2/> .



. . . and a monthly donation is especially appreciated . . .

Many thanks!

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