



Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming

January 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friend,

How has your experience of 2022 been so far?

Not too long ago, a friend asked what my favorite holiday was. They mentioned how some people look forward to the December holidays all year long and make a huge effort to enjoy them to the fullest, and they wondered: do I approach the holidays the same way?

While I love celebrating Christmas and ringing in the New Year with my family, I told my friend that I don't



actually have a favorite holiday. I went on to explain how one of my favorite things is to celebrate smaller holidays all year round - like National Ice Cream Day - even if I don't observe these holidays as a tradition. Sometimes my participation in these holidays is spontaneous, and sometimes it is planned. Either way, it gives me reason to celebrate the things in life that I might otherwise overlook or take for granted from February to November.

One practice I'm bringing with me into 2022 is to celebrate the lesser-known ecological holidays as a way to show my appreciation for the power of community and nature, because I believe these things are worth celebrating every day. (You've heard the saying, "Earth Day is every day.") With all the gloomy climate news and frightening COVID-19 projections circulating in the media, it can sometimes feel like the weight of the world sits upon our shoulders, but we have some good news: an abundance of inspiring eco-restoration stories to match the anxiety-inducing climate news! Are you interested in joining me? Here are five ecological holidays coming up in the next few weeks, sourced from [EcoEnclose](#):

International Zebra Day - January 31
World Wetlands Day - February 2
World Bonobo Day - February 14
World Hippopotamus Day - February 15
International Polar Bear Day - February 27

Off to celebrate National Peanut Brittle Day (January 26),

Abby

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Upcoming Events:

- January 27: [Arctic Meltdown: Why It Matters To Us](#), GBH Forum Network Talk with Jennifer Francis
 - Our next event in our Nature's Solutions as National Policy series is coming soon in February! Keep an eye on your inbox for more information and a link to register. In the meantime, check out the recordings of our past mini-conferences [here](#).
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Announcements

The January 2022 compendium is coming soon! The upcoming compendium will feature articles on two themes: the ecological roles of animals and the cooling function of ecosystems. Stay tuned for more information!



[Arctic Meltdown: Why It Matters To Us](#)

Thursday, January 27 at 6:00 pm EST



Dr. Heather Goldstone



Dr. Jennifer Francis

We are very excited to welcome Dr. Jennifer Francis from the Woodwell Research Institute in conversation with Dr. Heather Goldstone as the latest speaker in our lecture series *Life Saves the Planet!*

Does it seem the weather gods have gone crazy lately? It is not your imagination. The question on everyone's minds is why? And is it related to climate change?

In this presentation, Dr. Francis will explain how increasingly extreme weather events are connected with the Arctic's rapid warming and melting in recent decades.

Evidence suggests that Arctic warming is causing weather patterns to become more persistent, which can lead to extremes such as prolonged droughts, cold spells, heat waves, snowy winters, and flooding events.

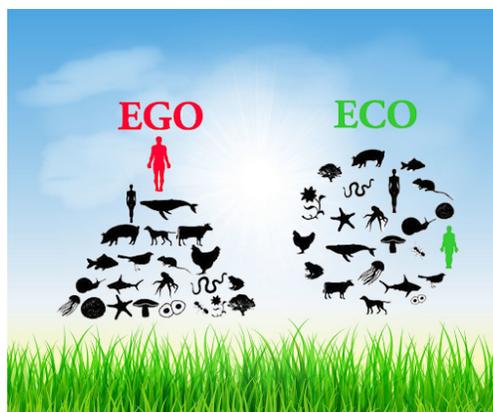
The talk will be recorded and made available online through GBH Forum Network. [Register for free here.](#)

Bio4Climate Spring 2022 Course Offerings

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate is delighted to introduce a brand new course this March! Our Digital Communications Manager Tania Roa, who holds a Master of Science in Animals and Public Policy from Tufts University, is teaching our next course offering, [Ego vs Eco: How Human, Animal, and Planet Health Interconnect.](#)

In this course, students will explore the relationships between humans, other animals, and the Earth. We will begin by introducing frameworks that embrace these relationships and demonstrate the benefits of adopting philosophies where humans are viewed as a part of nature rather than as separate or superior. We will then discuss the health implications of human activities that degrade ecosystems, harm other species, and spread zoonotic diseases.

Students will discuss barriers various communities face in environmental spaces and will learn about intersectional environmentalism, a concept that emphasizes collective healing through inclusive nature-based work. Finally, the course will wrap up with step-by-step guidelines for finding one's role in the climate movement.



Graphic by Darach Croft

This online course will consist of 8 classes and be held live on Zoom. Classes will begin March 2, 2022 and end on April 27, 2022 (with no class on March 30th). Classes will be held on Wednesdays from 12 to 1:30 pm ET and 7 to 8:30 pm ET to accommodate students' schedules. Students are invited to attend whichever of these two sessions is most convenient for them.

All readings and educational materials will be provided, and all assignments can be done on the computer. [Click here to register!](#)

Be sure to keep an eye out for more information about other course offerings our staff are preparing.

Meet Will Conklin, Executive Director of Greenagers

A little while back, I had the wonderful opportunity to sit down for a chat with Will Conklin, the executive director of a nonprofit called Greenagers in South Egremont, MA. Will has a calm, reassuring nature that I could feel even through the Zoom screen, and I could tell that he was bursting with passion for the work that Greenagers does. He shared how the organization involves young people from across Berkshire County, Massachusetts in environmental stewardship, from forming youth trail crews to operating a regenerative farm. Learn more here:



New On The Bio4Climate Blog



This past December, Bio4Climate hosted a virtual event called [Climate Emotions: Facing the Storm Together](#). Moderated by [Dr. Lisa Van Susteren](#), a panel consisting of Yvonne Cuaresma from the [Climate Journal Project](#) and Adam Sacks and Abby Abrahamson from Bio4Climate shared their individual experiences with climate emotions. During the second half of the event, participants formed small groups and shared their own stories, experiences, coping tools, and reasons for hope.

Leading up to the event, our Executive Director, Adam Sacks, wrote a thought-provoking piece for our blog called *Climate Emotions: The Turbulent Turf of 21st Century Feelings*. He writes: "Anxiety is not our only 'climate emotion,' far from it. Nor should it be. As we embrace our other powerful feelings, ones we like and ones we don't, we grow the possibilities for the world at large, for our many living relationships, and for our own hearts." [Click here](#) to read the full piece!

Compendium Notes

Below is a passage from our latest issue of the [Compendium of Scientific and Practical Findings Supporting Eco-Restoration to Address Global Warming](#). This article is from our [ninth issue](#), Volume 5 Number 1, (pp. 32-33), published July 2021.

We selected this book review in place of our usual article summary to honor the late biologist E.O. Wilson, who passed away on December 26, 2021.

Biophilia: The human bond with other species, E.O. Wilson, 1984

A book review by Rachel West

As I read the first chapter, Wilson brought me far into the forests of the Amazon Basin to encounter canopy-dwelling birds and frogs found nowhere else on Earth; he showed me the life cycle of a tiny moth so specialized that the adult lives only in the fur of the 3-toed sloth, and held up fistfuls of forest soil teeming with tiny life to demonstrate that "the woods were a biological maelstrom of which only the surface could be scanned by the naked eye."

With his astonishing eye for detail and his fluid prose, he fascinated me, he drew me in, he fed my curiosity...and then he reminded me: "Eliminate just one kind of tree out of hundreds in such a forest, and some of its pollinators, leaf eaters, and wood borers will disappear with it, then various of their parasites and key predators, and perhaps a species of bat or bird that depends on its fruit... and when will the reverberations end?"

Throughout this book, Wilson brought me close to the beauty of living systems across the world. He taught me enough about them to make me curious, and then to make me care; and then, when he showed me how easily that entire system could be disrupted, he had my undivided attention. This kind of understanding and connection, Wilson argues—this human bond with other species—is an essential ingredient in motivating us to change our behaviors in order to slow the rate at which "the wildernesses of the world [are shriveling] into timber leases and threatened nature reserves."

One of the challenges with building these connections and then acting upon them, Wilson suggests, is that we are programmed to operate in physiological, not ecological, time; that our minds "travel back and forth across hours, days, or at most a hundred years. The forests may all be cut, radiation slowly rise, and winters grow steadily colder, but if the effects are unlikely to become

decisive for a few generations, very few people will be stirred to revolt.” But in recent times, our impact on ecosystems has been compressing “ecological time” to align with “physiological time,” and the results are becoming visible in the span of single generations; the massive Florida manatee die-off due to the destruction of their seagrass pastures is but one stark example of the reverberation felt when we lose a single species from an ecosystem.

In the chapter “The Conservation Ethic,” near the end of the book, Wilson explores the relationship between the human drive to perpetually expand—and the related desire for personal freedom, at least in Western cultures—and the necessity for conscious stewardship of the environment to ensure our ultimate survival—not only our physical survival, but our spiritual survival. He writes, “The only way to make a conservation ethic work is to ground it in ultimately selfish reasoning.” In other words, it is likely that wild species and places will be best understood and protected with respect to their perceived value, like the vast array of plant compounds that have shown promise as anti-cancer compounds, or, as has been increasingly recognized in recent years, for the ability of wild places to improve the emotional and spiritual well-being of the people who spend time there.

This book is even more relevant now than it was when it was released in 1984, and thus has the potential to reach a broader audience today. More people may be ready to hear some of the truths held in this book because now, more than ever before, the human race is seeing, and feeling, the long-term effects of the way we have treated the planet.

Reference: Wilson, E.O., 1984, *Biophilia: The Human Bond with Other Species*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Last But Not Least. . .

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