



July 2019 Newsletter

Dear ,

We'll tell you a couple of these climate-saving stories out of the many hundreds of thousands out there (yes, you read that right!). And we'll have two whole days dedicated to telling them at our next conference!

For years we have brought the restoration work of individuals and organizations to our readers. This is the "Blessed Unrest" that Paul Hawken so eloquently described in 2007 when he spoke of a massive underground movement that often goes unnoticed by media, governments, and the public.

Countless people around the world are working to preserve and restore the Earth. For example, [Sustainable Harvest International](#) partners with farmers in Honduras, Belize, and Panama to improve sustainable farming practices and the livelihoods of farmers and their families.

Next spring, we'll bring you a conference that is rooted in Blessed Unrest. We'll celebrate the capacity of humans to be catalysts for life-sustaining change, and how this has been in the works for years - off the mainstream radar - in addressing ecosystem degradation and global warming. You can read more about the conference below.

And . . . We need all hands on deck! [Here are some ways in which you could help, be it in an individual or collaborative capacity.](#) As always, check out our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for your daily dose of good news from all over the world!

Let's stay inspired,

Manjulika Das, Project Manager



Photos courtesy of Sustainable Harvest International

Matt Russell prepares Iowa Farmers to talk about Agriculture as a Climate Solution



Photography by Dennis Chamberlin

Farmers out west are becoming increasingly aware of the climate conditions that threaten their crops and livelihoods. Recent catastrophic flooding has given many the incentive to change their current farming practices. Matt Russell, a fifth-generation farmer in Iowa who runs a livestock farm with his husband is trying to mobilize farmers to publicly speak about agriculture as an effective climate change solution. Russell also directs the Iowa branch of Interfaith Power and Light, a non-profit that promotes a religious response to global warming.

A Prairies Restoration Movement is reaping Benefits in the Great Plains



Photography by Melanie Stetson Freeman/CSM Staff

Ranchers in the northern Great Plains are restoring prairie pasture, land whose original native vegetation was stripped off to grow crops. This restoration allows the land to retain more water, and the soil to sequester more carbon.

When ranchers restore their pastureland, they also see their profits rise as they create better feed; this allows them to brand and sell their beef directly to consumers, or to profit through ecotourism.

"When I have a private conversation with a farmer, they are generally not skeptical about human-caused climate change. They just know they can't talk about it publicly," he says. Further, he says, advocating for farming practices that emphasize soil health and carbon sequestration allows farmers - a demographic usually seen as religious and conservative - to "slip in" to the climate conversation.

A few prominent conservatives like Ray Gaesser, a no-till farmer who ran for Iowa secretary of Agriculture last year, and Fred Yoder, an Ohio farmer who is on the president's agricultural committee, also support enabling farmers to engage in climate action through farming practices that help sequester carbon such as cover cropping and no-till farming.

What these farmers need is financial reward for work that they aren't getting credit for.

[Read more here.](#)

Meet Paula Phipps, Associate Director of Bio4Climate

Paula joined the team in 2014 after she attended Bio4Climate's very first conference. "It was a seminal conference that articulated what other groups were talking about, but did it in a way that made people want to take action", she says. She describes how, like many people, she came to the conference feeling full of despair, but came away feeling hopeful. "I realized that Bio4Climate was what I wanted to put my energy into. To work with people who actually faced how serious the situation is, yet remain hopeful. And to learn so much about how the planet works and understand that there are ways we can work with it to make it healthy again."



On any given day, Paula handles several different responsibilities for Bio4Climate, including outreach, conference planning, fundraising and presentations. She tables at events, and on social media she publicizes regenerative work that is going on all over the world. Currently she is readying a workshop to help parents and teachers prepare children for climate change.

As an educator she feels that climate change is an extremely important issue in children's lives. The workshop suggests ways to do so that are non-threatening, and helps parents and teachers understand how they are feeling themselves so that they can listen and respond well to children.

"We know that kids are thinking about climate change, even very young ones. There are some extreme weather events happening, and it's unavoidable for them to be aware of it. We also know that however hard we're working to address these impacts, we also need to help them prepare - and to do so constructively."

The workshop also aims to help adults and kids get a better sense of how connected we are to the natural world, and to see how all of us can really be "planet helpers".

Paula has drawn from her years in education and compiled an annotated bibliography of story books to help prepare children and youth for climate change, covering age groups from two to eighteen..

For more information, contact her at paula.phipps@bio4climate.org.

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 [third issue](#), July 2018, Vol. 2 No. 1 (p. 12):

Trees, forests, and water: cool insights for a hot world

This paper takes the innovative and paradigm-shifting position that carbon is not the primary consideration in climate; rather, water should be the central focus, integrated with carbon and energy cycles:

[email.html](#)

However, amid efforts to restore pastureland, many acres in the northern Great Plains--one of the world's largest remaining grasslands--continue to be converted to cropland. Fortunately, the rate of conversion has slowed considerably since 2016 in every state except South Dakota.

Sarah Sortum, whose family has diversified from ranching to ecotourism, explains how profits have improved now that they have a greater diversity of species on the land.

"Before our tourism ... we just managed for grass, because that's how we make money" - feeding grass to cattle, says Ms. Sortum. "Now ... the biggest difference from just managing for grass is managing for that diversity, because we realize that everything has value now--everything from the [flowering] forbs that we have out here, the wildflowers, to what they support."

[Read more here.](#)

Catch Us at these upcoming Events!

Your Toxic Backyard: How to prevent Toxic Yard Syndrome with Laura Stabell

When: 6-9pm, July 28, 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.

Laura will discuss general toxicology issues, what toxic substances may be found in your back yard, how they came to be there, and the role plants can play to remediate contaminated soils. We'll also discuss what you can do to prevent toxic yard syndrome.

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



NOFA Summer Conference

When: August 9-11, 2019

Where: Hampshire College, Amherst MA

Nutrition Matters | Soil Health Builds Human Health

Find out more and register [here](#).

in their local areas while connecting with each other to create global change. This is the spontaneous, non-governmental movement that environmentalist and author Paul Hawken has called "blessed unrest."

[Stay tuned and read more about our conference here!](#)



Photo courtesy of Sustainable Harvest International