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Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming

September 20, 2016

Interview with Lesley Laws, of *Zero Carbon Farming and Forestry Project Burga*

The Ebre River with the project's 70 Hectare property on the left. PC: Lesley Laws

Here at Bio4Climate, we are always keen on learning about various ecological restoration projects taking place around the world. We recently spoke with Lesley Laws, who has designed a carbon sink project in Spain. She calls it the Zero Carbon Farming and Forestry Project Burga.

Bio4Climate: Hi Lesley! Please tell us, where in the world are you currently living?

Lesley: I live in the valley of Southern Catalonia, Spain with my son Toni and his financée. We own a 5-acre plot, which will be the initial seed bank property for the project's nursery; it will provide seedlings for the project properties and also help replant the [surrounding] forest after thousands of trees were lost to wildfires. We have our own trees grown from seed, including native pines, western red cedar, Arizona blue cypress, loquat and ipe. Toni was born here less than a month after we moved to Spain. He is an integral part of this project. He was born and bred here in the valley - so one might say it's in his blood.

I was born and raised in the highlands of Kenya. My father was an engineer for Caltex Oil and my mother ran the farm: 300 acres of tea bushes, 50 acres of fruit orchards, commercial rabbit farming and a small herd of beef cattle. At school in Kenya we were encouraged to learn to work about the dairy, pig and mushroom farming business.

Here in Catalonia we have lived off the grid for 28 years. Solar and wind generate all of our electrical needs and we have cisterns and collect all our rainwater. Toni will be on the farming side of the project and also oversee all maintenance of solar technology and the machinery.

Bio4Climate: What is the project you are working on and how does it contribute to increasing biodiversity in the surrounding ecosystem?

Lesley: The project is what I'm calling a "Green Carpet Revolution" and it aims to protect the area from being redesigned for urban expansion as more properties are put up for sale or abandoned (this is an urgent problem) - to realize its potential as a carbon sink and biodiversity habitat. There is already an area of over 24,000 acres with traditional olive and almond groves, vineyards and areas of private forest and woodland. That is the foundation on which to build

Events

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When: November 18-20, 2016

Where: Geological Lecture Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tickets:

greater biodiversity.

The project is completely powered by renewable energy. PC: Lesley Laws

Bio4Climate: What are some of the species that are native to this area?

Lesley: The valley is home to many animal species, from wild boars and pygmy shrews to bats, owls, hawks, and many other species, both native and migratory, who rely on this area to nest and feed. Traditional foraging for snails, wild asparagus, and mushrooms in the forest plays an important role in local life.

Bio4Climate: How much atmospheric carbon can this project sequester?

Lesley: The initial project, once permiculture and biochar are utilized, has the potential to sequester roughly 850 tonnes of carbon per year. If the project can expand to a larger size, that could increase to 60,000 tonnes per year.

Bio4Climate: That all sounds very exciting. Where can readers find out more?

Lesley: At the end of the month we are having a crowd-funding campaign titled "Back to Eden" on Ulule. The funding will help us develop a website and blog and an online shop, where we will sell local

Regular, $150; Early-Bird (by October 16, 2016), $100; Student/Low-income, $20

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About Bio4Climate

Through education, policy and outreach, our mission is to promote the power of the natural world to stabilize the climate and to restore biodiversity to ecosystems worldwide. Collaborating with organizations around the globe, we advocate for the restoration of soil, and of grassland, forest, wetland, coastal and ocean

honey, extra virgin olive oil, and other quality natural products and crafts.

If people wish to contact us for further details on the project they can email me at choices4u121(at)gmail(dot)com.

Bio4Climate: Thanks so much for speaking with us, Lesley!

Conference Speaker Anamarija Frankić

Anamarija Frankić is the Director of the Green Harbors Project at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Her work is based on the integration of three key areas - teaching, service and scholarship - in order to best practice coastal ecosystem stewardship for this campus, this harbor, and for coastal areas around the globe. Her central premise is that the "environment sets the limits" - and therefore we need to learn and practice living within the requirements of the ecosystems that sustain us.

Conference Speaker Alfredo Quarto

ecosystems-along with the associated carbon, water and nutrient cycles - to draw down excess atmospheric greenhouse gases, cool the biosphere, and reverse global warming, for the benefit of all people and all life on earth.

Learn more about our ongoing projects, upcoming events and find additional information and resources at bio4climate.org.

Alfredo Quarto is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Mangrove Action Project. He is a veteran campaigner with over 35 years experience working on international environmental and social justice issues. His experiences range over many different countries and several environmental organizations, with a long-term focus on marine ecology, wildlife, forestry and human rights.

The Vermont Farm to Plate food system

Farmers on Fable Farm, an organic CSA in Barnard, VT. PC: Fable Farm

Created in 2011 by the Vermont Sustainable Job Fund, the Farm to Plate food system plan is already showing inspiring results: Food system jobs in the state increased by almost 10 percent and local food purchasing has increased from 5 percent in 2010 to 6.9 percent in 2015. Other New England states, including Massachusetts and New Hampshire, are taking notes from Vermont's food system planning process in the effort to progress their own sustainable food systems.