

Environmental Crisis: Acknowledgement of The Threat to Mother Earth

by Jason Powers, January 2004

In seeing how our natural resources are spent and realizing the shortsighted ways of Americans, it would be remiss not to mention this great tragedy in our society. In each succeeding generation we destroy more and guard less of our fertile, beautiful, but limited resources. Acreage is lost to urban sprawl, deforestation, and waste disposal among other mechanisms. We favor capital land improvements over protection of nature's greatest gifts – flora and fauna that provide beauty for the ages, balance to our ecology and a naturally replenishing supply of food resources. We overlook the importance of replacement of vitally important resources such as trees that take at bare minimum, 50 to 100 years to reach full maturity. The effects of mismanagement of waste disposal have far reaching effects on water supply for fish, animals, and human consumption.

There are many proposals to improve this situation – limits imposed on the amount of land that can be cannibalized for use of building housing, manufacturing sites, and mall areas. Better control of zoning, forcing houses up (as in big cities), instead of out (as in suburbia and rural areas), keeping out businesses that increase pollution levels greatly by enforcing all environmentally-impacting laws. (And discovering which laws will be of greatest use to deter these destructive practices. And producing fines for all infractions that constitute a negligent attitude.)

We must also increase the study of genetically-hardy plants. Study the use of sea floors for production of food of all types- both flora and fauna. But to do that, we must endeavor to preserve it as it once was. 150 years ago, we still had a reasonably healthy ocean, but over fishing, polluting through humanities hunt for oil and destroying the ecological balance of reefs and corals has changed it permanently.

Water temperatures and ocean levels are changed by our pollutants; Growth of coast side inhabitants has furthered this along because factories exist too close to them. The fact we neglected to involve environmental assessments in the Industrial Age does not mean that we should side step them now in the Internet Age. If we refuse to consider the impacts, these changes will, eventually, manifest themselves in dire ways to the entire world. (Famine, environmentally distressing temperature conditions to humans and conflict over fertile lands, and thus, possible war for resources.)

The hardest part is tell ourselves that this is it. One world exist for us to live on, breath and eat and multiply on. Resources such as oil, coal and wood are becoming less available and the pollution involved in producing materials and by-products has ultimately done grave harm to the entire environment. Even nuclear material (once lauded and harnessed for good) is scarce. Yet, nuclear power likely provides a plausible way to address power needs for the next century. (And it can be done safely and responsibly, if the human will exists.) But these all come with severe risks to our way of life.

Some alternatives: Solar power, wind power and sea power have all the potentials to make it possible to run our society. However, the sunk costs are enormous to start. This makes it a certainty that we will avoid it at all costs; until the costs are determined to be less than the destruction we maybe currently involved in, whether it be war or something else just as grave: the inevitable destruction of our Earth.

It can only be hoped we will not wait until that fateful day comes.