



NGO SUSTAINABILITY

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LATEST NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY

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PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET

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- NGO Sustainability Team

“I have learned that you are never too small to make a difference.”

—Greta Thunberg:

Vanessa Nakate

Vanessa Nakate is a leading global voice for climate justice and one of the most influential young activists of this generation. Born in Uganda in 1996, she began her climate activism in 2018 with a solitary school strike for the climate in Kampala. Since then, she has emerged as a passionate advocate for environmental equity, amplifying the voices of frontline communities in Africa and beyond.

Nakate is the founder of the Rise Up Movement, a platform that supports youth activists across Africa and spotlights the disproportionate impacts of climate change on the Global South. Her work emphasizes the urgent need for climate adaptation financing, education, and inclusive leadership in decision-making spaces. She has addressed world leaders at the United Nations, COP climate summits, and the World Economic Forum, powerfully challenging global inaction and calling for climate solutions rooted in justice. In 2022, she was appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, further expanding her role as a champion for intergenerational and climate justice.



Vanessa Nakate, Climate Activist, speaking at the Global Citizen NOW Summit on April 27, 2023 in New York City.

Source: Getty Images

Named one of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People, Vanessa Nakate is reshaping the global climate not just as a youth leader, but as a fierce advocate for a just, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Source:

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Vanessa Nakate*. UNICEF.
<https://www.unicef.org/goodwill-ambassadors/vanessa-naka>

This planet does not belong to us

By Hayleigh

*These people, these lives, these houses, these homes, these hills, these
trees, these animals, these rivers, these seas.*

*We are not building an empire, we are destroying one, and every living,
breathing thing in it.*

*We are walking catastrophes, entire tsunamis tripping off our tongues,
rivers rolling between our lips. Streams of change, ebbing through
microplastic in our veins with nets around our necks.*

*Let us be the change we want to see in the world, let us plant trees, climb
to the top of them and scream from the top of our lungs for every single
thing we are grateful for, let this planet be at the very top of that list.*

*As long as we inhale and exhale every moment; every
memory, every molecule on this earth, let us not forget, we belong to it, and not the other
way round.*

*There is so much yet we can do, so many lives we can transform, entire
continents we can claim and cure.*

Let us find peace before we are torn to pieces by our very own hands.

Source:

Hayleigh. This planet does not belong to us. Hello Poetry.
<https://hellopoetry.com/poem/3040770/this-planet-does-not-belong-to-us/>

“How Tariffs Could Upend the Transition to Cleaner Energy”

By: Max Bearak Brad Plumer and Somini Sengupta,
NY Times



Photo: Getty Images

The Trump administration's increased tariffs is anticipated to increase the cost of renewable energy technology, impacting the clean-energy productions of the United States. Green technology material exporters such as the European Union, China, and Southeast Asia, will be complicit to the tariffs based on their productions of solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries for electric vehicles. Simultaneously, the tariffs have altered the dynamics of trading on a global scale. China is shifting its clean-tech exports to developing countries like Pakistan and Brazil. Whilst India is now seen as a potential prospect by the U.S. due to lower tariffs. Experts such as Vanessa Sciarra from the American Clean Power Association expressed the concerns that the U.S. unpredictable shifting of trade policy will impact the affordable and reliable energy for the American people.

[Full Article](#)

“New Climate Rule Could Make Polluters Pay”

By: Austyn Gaffney, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

The Climate Change Superfund Act requires polluters to be held liable for climate damage which has been enacted in Vermont. This has alarmed oil industrial representatives because of the federal government’s overreach to regulate emissions. Attribution science links the harms to states and communities and the entities that cause harm through specific activities. For example, correlating heat with a downturn in the economy would be the justification for the finding that underscores the impact to global gross domestic product. When the externalities of the impact from climate change are accounted for, the damages considered are greater. Similarly, in the past the attribution would be the Holy Grail of “climate liability”.

[Full Article](#)

“The Shocking Rise of Solar is Reshaping the Energy Landscape”

By: David Wallace-Wells *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

A new rule in Africa that affects farmers in who produce coffee will require them to document the beans they send. The geolocation data would be necessary to verify that the land was not recently deforested. The “EU Deforestation Regulation” is a way to increase the sustainability in agricultural production, but also imposes an impact on small farmers in lieu of balancing the needs of nature and people. The effect on the disproportionately smaller population of people who affect climate change less is significant compared to the Global North. As of March, 24,000 farms were mapped and officials would cross-check data. The cost of mapping one farm was about \$4, so it raises the question of whether the administrative and funding efforts could be better used in an alternative way. Indonesia, Peru and Brazil are some of the other countries affected by growing coffee demands.

[Full Article](#)

“Trump Administration Cuts Research Funding, Claiming It Creates ‘Climate Anxiety’”

By: Brad Plumer and Austyn Gaffney, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

Recently, the Trump Administration has cut \$4 million of federal funding for climate research at Princeton University, arguing it caused “climate anxiety” and was “exaggerated and implausible.” These programs study crucial topics such as sea-level rise and coastal flooding, and were cut shortly following implied cuts to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as well. The Commerce Department also ceased funding for climate education initiatives and five-year efforts to study both water scarcity and precipitation patterns as affected by climate change. Climate scientists argue these climate-related risks are present, and cuts only damage the climate models that are critical globally.

[Full Article](#)

“Shell Recyclers in Connecticut Are Helping Oysters Find Homes”

By: Kate Selig, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

Last year, the Oyster Club in Mystic, Connecticut averaged to have shucked 300,000 oysters within a year, the leftover oysters shells made their way back to the Long Island Sound where they came from, by the efforts of Collective Oyster Recycling and Restoration (CORP). The program's initiative is to return oyster shells to their original ecosystem within the Long Island Sound, to combat the declining rate of oysters, coastal erosion, and restore reefs. The company collects discarded shells by partnering with local businesses, and offering free collections. The intensive method of recycling and returning the shells takes 6 months to eliminate pathogens before their return. Afterwards, they are disposed offshore by Bridgeport and Stratford in state owned oyster beds. The company's impact on marine ecosystems was not unnoticed by the state, which gave them a \$400,000 grant to support their efforts and further their commitment to preservation.

[Full Article](#)

“A New Hotel Says It’s ‘Carbon Positive’. Is That Hype or Reality?”

By: Cindy Hirschfeld, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

The new announcement of a hotel that is “climate positive” is taking people by surprise. The hotel that has over 200 rooms evokes what is known as an “exceptional level” of sustainability. The hotel is designed by a Chicago-based firm and should sequester more carbon than it emits. There are resorts that have this accolade, which includes photovoltaic panels, or other advanced sustainable features. The false promises, however, of mitigating the impacts of climate, could be considered in a holistic approach to reducing emissions. The most conscious approach would be to ideally not build more, but the inspiration to future infrastructure could be acknowledged. The fiber-glass panels, for example, keep the building cool in winter, and the existing parking lots are being utilized while suggesting public transportation use. Some of the hotels’ byproducts are used as compost and carbon offsets are part of the design.

[Full Article](#)

“Scientists Revive the Dire Wolf, or Something Close”

By: Carl Zimmer, *NY Times*

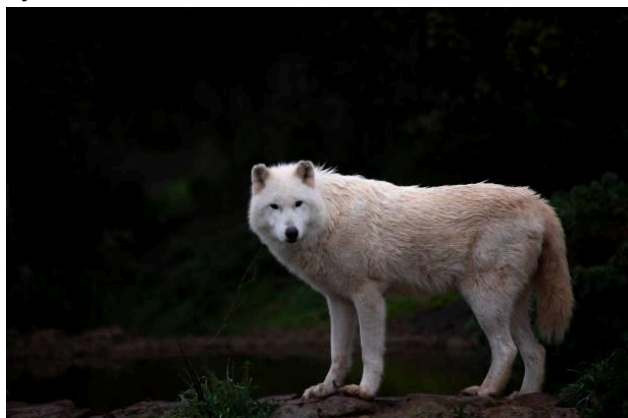


Photo: Getty Images

An extinct species is now thought to be recreated. The DNA was collected and with additional discoveries, the embryos from grey wolf cells were recreated in surrogates. There are young pups now, and they are being kept at an undisclosed location in the northern United States. The technology would be applicable to species that have not gone extinct yet and would be helpful for preserving biodiversity. The introduction of clones could assist with the genetic diversity and reviving lost species. The scientists who began the company in 2021 wanted to discern the mutations to engineer the DNA of a living relative. The replications would be identical in certain ways to the others.

[Full Article](#)

“Sponges Made From Food Scraps Produces Clean Water From Thin Air”

By: *Anthropocene Magazine*

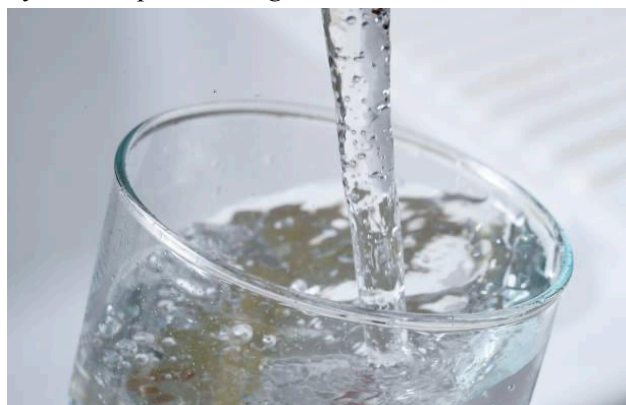


Photo: Getty Images

A new hydrogel created from natural waste takes in drinkable water from the air and could be a way to reduce water scarcity. The atmosphere contains much of the world’s water supply, and in dry environments it is possibly the only accessible source of hydration. The cellulose-based gel is efficient, releasing 95% of captured water at 60°C in water uptake lab tests. Water was harvested in the absorption cycle and the vapors residuals were collected on a glass plate. For each kilogram of hydrogel, there was 14.19 L of clean water generated each day. Given the large-scale production and available biomass, the practical implications for emergency relief efforts could be indicated.

[Full Article](#)

Finland's Climate Act (2022): A legal framework for carbon neutrality by 2035

Albert Lindholm (NGO Intern)

In June 2022, Finland established itself as one of the leading countries in the world on climate action by adopting the revised Climate Act (423/2022). The new legislation significantly advances Finland's climate governance and makes Finland's already ambitious climate targets legally binding. The revised climate act legally commits Finland to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Thereafter, the aim is to achieve carbon negativity meaning the country will remove more carbon from the atmosphere than it emits. The Act is specifically designed to position Finland as a leader in sustainable development and set a benchmark for climate legislation for the rest of the world.

The Climate Act sets clear, legally binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets relative to 1990 levels. It mandates a 60% reduction by 2030, aims for net-zero emissions by 2035, increases the target to an 80% reduction by 2040, and ultimately seeks a 90% reduction by 2050. The Act includes rules that the government must monitor the implementation of the climate policy plans and, if necessary, decide on additional measures to achieve the set targets. This provision has led to legal actions taken by NGOs that argue that the government hasn't taken enough action to meet all its obligations under the Act.

To achieve these ambitious targets, the Climate Act introduces a structured framework essential for Finland to succeed. The framework includes a long-term climate policy plan to be updated every ten years. A medium-term climate plan that is reviewed and updated every governmental term that outlines detailed measures needed to meet the emission reduction targets. A national climate adaptation plan updated every second governmental term that focuses on strategies for adapting to climate-related impacts. Lastly, it includes a land use and forestry plan aimed at enhancing the ability of Finland's natural carbon sinks, such as forests and peatlands.

What distinguishes Finland's climate act from is its focus on enhancing its natural carbon sinks. Finland has ample forest resources and peatland that play a critical role in capturing carbon. However, recent challenges have emerged as Finland's carbon sinks have faced challenges such as intensive logging, increased wildfire risk, and effects of climate change, such as prolonged droughts. It is critical for

Finland to address these challenges. The Climate Act also highlights transparency and inclusivity and aims to increase public participation in climate policy planning. The Act considers the Indigenous Sami people to ensure that climate policies do not adversely affect their culture and livelihoods.

In conclusion, Finland's Climate Act (2022) represents a comprehensive and ambitious plan to combat climate change that is, most importantly, legally binding. The Act includes ambitious targets and a robust framework for planning and monitoring the country on its path to achieve net zero by 2035. While challenges remain, particularly concerning the country's carbon sink, the act positions Finland as a leading nation in climate legislation.

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NGO Sustainability's Earth Day Statement

This year, Earth Day arrives with a moment of profound global reflection as we mourn the passing of Pope Francis, a tireless advocate for environmental justice and the moral imperative of climate action. His landmark Papal encyclical, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, was a turning point in faith-based environmental advocacy, calling on humanity to recognize the interconnectedness of all life and the urgent need to protect the Earth. His leadership helped elevate environmental stewardship as a moral and spiritual responsibility across faiths and nations.

First celebrated on April 22, 1970, Earth Day was founded by US Senator Gaylord Nelson as a call to action, bringing environmental concerns to the forefront of the national agenda. It united millions of people in a shared commitment to protecting the Earth—a spirit that remains essential today.

The theme for Earth Day 2025, "**Our Power, Our Planet**," urges us to unite behind the transition to renewable energy, with a goal of tripling clean electricity by 2030. It is a call to action that aligns deeply with Pope Francis's vision of a just and sustainable world.

Despite the challenges of the current political environment, on this Earth Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to the planet, to each other, and to future generations. Let us lead by example, act boldly, and continue to advocate for the transition to a cleaner, greener world.

Roma Stibravy

President, NGO Sustainability

What Earth Day Means to NGO Sustainability Interns

“Earth day is an amazing reminder that we all have a part to play in taking care of our mother Earth, not just on April 22nd, but every day. I try to be environmentally mindful in many ways, including using less plastic, walking or biking whenever possible, and staying aware of my impact overall. Our theme this year, OUR POWER, OUR PLANET, makes me think about how much we can do for our planet when we come together. This is especially true when discussing clean energy and making sustainable choices. I am proud to be a part of a team that is dedicated to making a difference and pushing for real change!

— **Ella Liebel**

“April 22nd marks an annual reminder of my personal decision back in 2018 to become vegetarian at the age of 16. What started as a simple class goal to eat meatless for one week, created by my Earth Science high school teacher, turned into a continuous 6-year commitment. This began after our teacher had us watch the film What the Health by Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn. The movie had completely rewired my brain and left me very confused about my personal decision: Why do I eat meat? Data from the film portrayed the negative impacts that consuming meat has on our bodies; however, it talked about how it reaches even further than our bodies, extending to our planet as well. Meat consumption has led to the global development of factory farming, which is a significant contributor to climate change. The unconscious decision to eat meat daily, without knowing how it adds to the release of greenhouse emissions, deforestation, and pollution, left me in turmoil. That's when I truly recall ever becoming climate conscious. This moment was my turning point when I realized that every action, even something as simple as what we eat, can have a lasting impact on the environment. Since then, I've felt more connected to the Earth, and I continue to be driven to make choices that align with my values of sustainability and responsibility toward the planet.”

— **Xena Moy.**

“To me Earth Day has always been important, from my early elementary day to now it has always been stressed to me how important keeping our Earth clean is. As someone who is very passionate about the outdoors and spending time in nature I have always made sure to do my

part to keep the Earth clean. By using paper straws, recycling cans, turning off lights that aren't being used, and using my bike to get around, I have always made sure to live as reserved as I can in order to do my part in keeping our Earth clean. One thing me and my family have always done is maintaining a compost pile for all decomposable, leftover food items, we also have an efficient, yet complicated, system of disposing trash, which greatly reduces our garbage output. I want to reserve our planet by making as efficient of a lifestyle as I can and make sure to take all the steps in that process so I can!"

— **Michael Cooper**

"Earth day is not only a celebration of our planet and its natural resources but also a reminder of the power of the collective. I stay environmentally mindful by shopping secondhand, walking places instead of driving, cutting down on single-use plastics, and spreading awareness about sustainable practices. If everyone makes more sustainable choices in their every-day lives, we together can work towards a more environmentally friendly future. Each of our individual actions summed together can have a monumental impact on our world."

— **Grace Reuben**

"As an intern with NGO Sustainability, Earth day holds personal significance to me. I have celebrated Earth Day as long as I can remember, and have always understood the importance of this day in educating and raising awareness for sustainability, conservation, and environmental protection around the world. I think Earth Day is important so everyone can be reminded about environmental protection, and that as people with the ability to create change, we can make positive change for our planet. I impact Earth Day personally by participating in various events at my university campus. Tomorrow, I will be celebrating by educating students on my campus about the various efforts my university is conducting in order to be sustainable-- including zero waste programs, watershed clean-ups, and more-- by tabling with the sustainability student club I am a part of. Furthermore, I will impact earth day by walking throughout the day instead of driving, reducing water and electricity, and minimizing food waste-- which are all things I try my best to do on a daily basis."

— **Isabel Holland**

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