Ice Defenders

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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a proposed grassroots non-organization to reckon with the approaching ice-free Arctic which signals a runaway feedback loop for global temperature rise and hostile climate.

Mission and philosophy of Ice Defenders: "Anything goes in defense of Arctic ice"

The consensus on current information for understanding the Arctic's climate role, from top scientists speaking plainly: Arctic Methane: Why The Sea Ice Matters (video)

There's good news and bad news. First, the bad news (the problem):

Those fighting to destroy the world fastest are a small group of privileged, greedy industrialists and financiers. Whatever size this demographic is, and whatever amount of financial and material resources it commands, these people and their institutions reach down the social pyramid and encourage all those glad to utilize global-warming machinery and practices for profit.

All forms of businesses are in effect profiting off oil, when operating beyond local subsistence needs, in excess of what is sustainable and equitable. Most common are aficionados of gross inefficiency and apathetic bystanders of all economic strata. Unless cynically well informed, all of the above have managed to stay confused or oblivious about key facts and the meaning of:
• 40% of phytoplankton in ocean water is gone, the basis of the seas' food chain and the "blue lungs" of the Earth of oxygen. Acidification from CO2 in the water and ozone layer depletion are the culprits. Toxic plastic debris is increasingly more plentiful than zooplankton.

• The combined energy content of methane hydrate in the Arctic far exceeds all other known fossil fuels' quantity, according to the U.S. Dept. of Energy. The implications of this methane ice continuing to rapidly melt and bubble to the surface are staggering, when methane is 23 times more powerful than CO2 as a greenhouse gas. And when methane explodes it gives off heat and CO2.

• The risk is to far more than "civilization's legacy," as voiced by NASA's James Hansen, who with Al Gore broke the story that global warming has begun (1988 Senate hearing). Hansen speaks of tens of meters of sea-level rise destroying much of civilization. The loss of life, and the additional CO2 feedback of land vegetation killed that becomes a huge carbon source, is more important than civilization's legacy.

Before civilization there was no problem. Can we live without civilization? It would be more than iffy, to the billions depending on petroleum today in some way. But would you like a stable natural environment sans civilization if that was a choice, doing without the trappings of civilization and rampant technology that threatens all life today? A greener clean-tech economy is a pipe dream if not implemented in such a way to not only immediately stop, but reverse, greenhouse gas emissions and their effects.

The good news:
• The excess carbon in the atmosphere, roughly the extra 100 parts per million added since industrialization, can be sequestered if several million people planted one tree a day for a few years. This revolution, in addition to shutting down fossil fuels extraction for industrial profit, and stopping willful deforestation, is our universal need -- for all species known and unknown. Albert Bates, author of The Biochar Solution, has calculated tree planting logistics for maximum carbon sequestration.*

• Recent research on happiness has shown that achieving a closer sense of community and practicing more personal expression provide far greater rewards than what materialism and consuming can give. Now being added to the growing Happiness movement is consciousness of environmental sustainability, as an essential personal and collective pursuit. Happiness is compatible with sustainability, whereas materialism and economic growth are not.

• Appropriate Tech, a catch-all for efficient use of local resources that leaves or renews them for future generations, is on the rise: there is more bicycling, farmers markets, permaculture, rediscovering our ancestors' skills and crafts, decentralized renewable energy systems -- all are opportunities to get involved and cut one's costs of living, and are available and thriving.

• Rethinking world trade and travel has hit mainstream media (BBC, CNN-Int'l) with coverage of the sail transport movement. While cargo ships running on bunker fuel comprise "only" 4% of global CO2 emissions, just 16 (sixteen) vessels spew as much sulphur and other pollutants as all the world's cars. The 70,000 or so cargo ships burning oil have had to slow down to 15 knots, the speed of the old clipper ships of 150 years ago, to save fuel and cut costs.

• The survival instinct is high for everyone, except for certain demographics committing suicide in high numbers (military personnel and veterans of U.S. oil-related wars). The only trick is to get people to take sensible action, such as with the above points, on their food security beyond their current employment period that can end suddenly.

Platform for implementation

Relegating the preoccupation with national electoral politics to secondary concern means "going local." National office is dominated by mega financial interests such as fossil fuels industries and motor vehicle corporations. Going local can include "going loco" for protecting Mother Nature and one's family and friends. What may be viewed as insane or extreme today may be someday be viewed as reasonable and better-late-than-never.

Community self-reliance will be increasingly necessary when the instability of oil supply culminates in a crisis of employment, transportation and food growing & distribution. Examples of going local mean buying no products from out of one's bioregion if at all possible (unless brought by near zero-carbon sail transport). This is not so hard, when even a car-dependent person justifying daily driving can always buy a used car, thereby keeping money in the community.

Chapters or any formation of Ice Defenders can pursue relocalizing and any form of protection of Arctic ice. Spreading the news about protecting polar bears as an endangered species is helpful. But iconic animals are increasingly impossible to save, at this point, with legislation. Because desirable new laws, even if passed, will not dismantle or replace widespread, ubiquitous petroleum consumption, nor the buying of unnecessary new corporate products.

Joining a Transition Town group or other environmental group is helpful, but the approach of such membership/meeting groups has not kept pace with the drift toward climate extinction. Greenpeace and Earth First! have been active for decades but have not succeeded overall. So a new ethic to appeal to the average person's idea of safeguarding a so-far-benign climate has to be instilled. Making popular the mission of Ice Defenders (or the equivalent) is key. Vilifying or criminalizing climate destroyers could come into vogue. Acting to protect Arctic ice, wherever one happens to live, can be done via education, direct action and trying to break through the corporate media complex. But if that approach fails, Plan B would be to anticipate economic collapse that is happening already in large part due to the destruction of nature.

Questioning the sacred cows of growth of civilization and population must be done by a critical mass; it has heretofore been limited to intellectuals -- many of whom do not limit their own consumption. Even the Occupy movement has been saddled with the idea of exceptionalism, the misconception that middle class affluence is the natural norm and a right for all. But the Occupy movement is proof that mobilization of masses can happen suddenly, boding well for a climate protection movement that goes beyond the good work of 350.org and others. Why the Occupy movement abated and stalled may be due to the lack of connection to the land: occupying the commons for food security didn't happen except perhaps with the confrontation with the University of California Berkeley over the Gill Tract farming insurrection.

"Living the future now" needs to come about voluntarily and made popular and alluring. Just how this is approached is for the individual and the community to decide. The "carrot and stick" can be applied variously. Imagination regarding what constitutes rights, opposing the prerogatives of private property via civil disobedience, will come into play. The arts and the formation of nonviolent affinity groups, clandestine or high profile, can involve everyone. It all comes down to "Anything goes in defense of Arctic ice." The goal is to launch this principle before calamities such as food riots and unnatural disasters from climate chaos take hold of major populations. For this would worsen the ability of people to plan for and salvage a sustainable future.

Shall we bring back the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium's bike sticker "Turn the ignition, melt a glacier" in massive quantities to apply on cars?

Have a Global Warming Day,

Depaver Jan Lundberg

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Further reading:

*To cancel the world's fossil fuel greenhouse gas emissions would require 2.5 million sq.mi. (6.64 million sq.km) of trees being planted annually, and kept growing for a century or more. But, were we to try to return to the Holocene climate in the present century, we'd probably need to plant twice that much. We would need 7.6 million people to plant one tree per day, or about one third of all students in post-secondary education in the United States. But at that one-tree-per-day-rate, they would exhaust the world's entire available inventory of uncropped arable land in a single year. The only way the tree-planting could be sustained more than one year would be by planting the world's deserts, now some 50% of the land area of the earth (but expanding), perhaps after the style of Geoff Lawton's permaculture work in Jordan or the Sahara Forest Project. - Albert Bates, for Culture Change, January 6, 2013

Greenhouse gas levels pass symbolic 400ppm CO2 milestone - Guardian, UK, June 2012

As pointed out by the United Nations Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases in 1990, “Beyond 1 degree C may elicit rapid, unpredictable and non-linear responses that could lead to extensive ecosystem damage.” Planetary instruments indicate Earth has warmed about 1 C since the beginning of the industrial revolution. However, plants in the vicinity of Concord, Massachusetts — where the instrumental record indicates warming of about 1 C -- indicate warming of 2.4 C since the 1840s." Climate-change summary and update - Guy McPherson, Nature Bats Last

Envisionation - communicating climate, from the UK

Take the Pledge for Climate Protection - ten vital steps to slow global warming and climate destabilization that also prepare for petrocollapse.

Check out the Sail Transport Network