



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS & GLOBAL HEALTH

Volume 5, Number 3

<https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>

January 17, 2019

EXPERTS WARN AGAINST MEGA-DAMS IN LOWLAND TROPICAL FORESTS

A new study in the Journal of Applied Ecology from the University of Stirling that focused on a reservoir system in the Brazilian Amazon caution that mega-dams are a threat to biodiversity and ecosystems and thus should not be built in lowland tropical forest regions. The Balbina dam has caused forest fragmentation, changing hilltops into islands. Experts found that tree communities on the 3500 Balbina's islands are considered unstable, with some rare species that are at risk of being extinct and carbon storage being. Moreover, reservoirs in tropical regions can emit large amounts of greenhouse gases including methane. Nonetheless, the amount of dam construction in Amazonia continues to rise, with more than 280 new dams planned or already under construction, which means that there are great risks to a region that is important in global climatic balance and biodiversity.

[Read more at Science Daily.](#)



Credit: Isabel Jones

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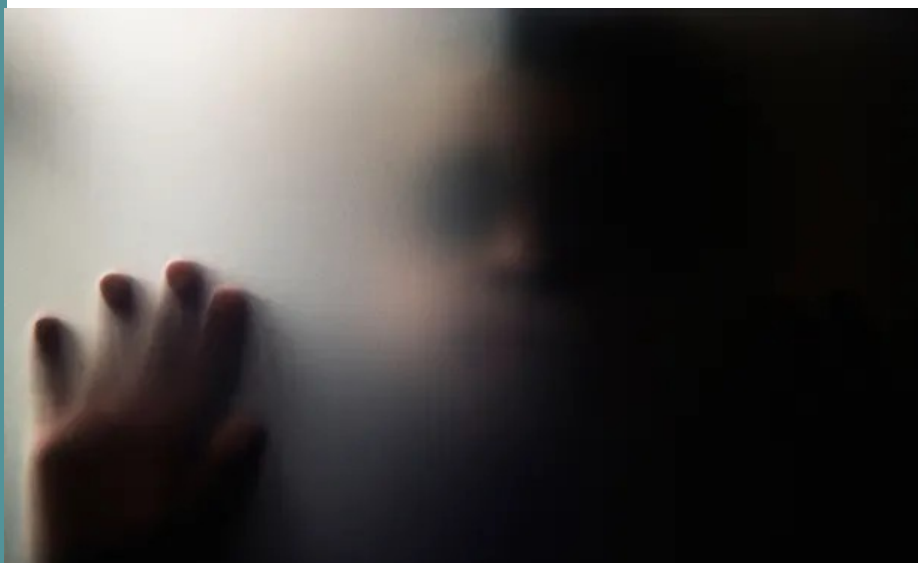
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Medical Student Advocacy

CHILDHOOD ABUSE INCREASES RISK OF ADULT SUICIDE

According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, our planet will be 1.5°C hotter than pre-industrial levels in 12-34 years if we continue to burn fossil fuels at the present rate. This increase of 1.5°C can lead to the death of 70-90% of our coral reefs and damage to our terrestrial crops and ecosystems. Climate change can also contribute to intensified heat waves and storms, air pollution, malnutrition, climate sensitive infectious diseases, and social dislocation, which can all threaten public health. In order to limit global warming to under 1.5°C, there needs to be a 45% decline in global net emissions of CO2 by 2030, and "net zero" emissions by 2050.

[Read more at The Guardian.](#)



Credit: Don Smith/Alamy



CLIMATE DENIAL IN THE HIMALAYA

Chinese studies show the Tibetan plateau is warming three times faster compared to other parts of the globe. In southwestern China, the average annual temperature increased 0.12 degrees Celsius per decade from 1961 to 2010. There are also other studies that believe that by 2050, the average temperatures in the Hindu Kush Himalayas will increase by 1 to 2 degree(s) Celsius, and even up to degree Celsius in some locations. A study by Lanzhou University study confirms in Tibet, the snow cover decreased at altitudes above 2,000m, but increased at lower altitudes. As the temperature increase, there will be more rapid snowmelt, affecting those living in the region severely. The flow of rivers from the Tibetan Plateau will be affected, which will affect agriculture and hydropower projects. In addition, there are hazards linked with shrinking glaciers, which can compromise large infrastructure investment. Given that most of the agriculture in mountains depends on rain, farmers are highly vulnerable to rainfall variability. Although there is collaboration between Nepal, India and China on river basins, it is negligible. [Read more at Nepali Times.](#)

Credit: Nabin Baral

WORLD BANK PRESIDENT JIM YONG KIM TO STEP DOWN AMID TRUMP CLIMATE CLASH

Dr. Kim resigned from his post three years early with no official reason. Two years ago, Kim was re-elected to a second term to avoid the unseemly fight that is probably associated with the selection of his successor. Kim's departure raises questions regarding how the World Bank president will be selected.

[Read more at Business Green.](#)

See also:
[Isolated World Bank chief faced heat on cost cuts and China](#)



Credit: World Bank/Simone D. McCourtie



COSTA RICA HITS RENEWABLE ENERGY MARK FOR FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW

For four consecutive years, Costa Rica generated over 98% of its power through renewable sources. According to the Costa Rican Electricity Institute, 1.44% of the electricity in Central America were generated from fossil fuel plants in 2018. The main source of energy is river water with 73.87%, followed by wind with 15.6% and geothermal energy with 8.38%. During 2018, Costa Rica avoided using its fossil fuels plants in 300 days. The month that generated the most renewable electricity with approximately 976.78 gigawatts an hour was October.

[Read more at Solar Daily.](#)

Credit: Carl Attard/Pexels



BLACK LUNG RESURGENCE RAISES NEW CHALLENGES FOR COAL COUNTRY PHYSICIANS

Physicians in Appalachian regions of the United States continue to struggle with how to counsel miners who may have to decide between keeping their job or protecting their health as reports of black lung disease have increased significantly. Although there is federal job protection, some physicians felt that miners fear the retribution of mine operators given that mine operators pay for disability claims, which miners may receive if they get medical advice. In addition, miners' pay and insurance benefits can be more attractive than jobs outside of mining. These challenges is a changing demographic. Although the most severe form of black cancer, progressive massive fibrosis (PMF), is usually found among miners in their 60s and 70s, PMF is now diagnosed in younger, mid-career miners.

[Read more at JAMA Network.](#)

Credit: Pixabay

THAILAND'S COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL COOPERATION ON NCDs: ACTING TOGETHER NOW

In 2018, the third UN High-Level meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) at the UN General Assembly was the first gathering where heads of state and government discuss NCDs since 2015 when the member states committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Prime Minister's Office in Thailand is now leading the NCD response, bringing together various organisations to develop effective policies and plans for NCDs. The Royal Thai Government is now collaborating with industry and communities on various key issues.

[Read more at The Lancet.](#)



Credit: David Zakus

STRUCTURAL PROFILE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN CANADA

The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy has recently updated its Structural Profile of Public Health in Canada. The structure of public health in Canada is complex given that the ten provinces and three territories are all structured differently. The Structural Profile of Public Health is designed in the form of a comparative table to illustrate how public health functions are organized within each of these jurisdictions and the significant reforms that helped shape the current structure of the public health system.

[Click here to consult the profile.](#)



Credit: rawpixel.com



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO RESEARCHER ON THE USE OF PREP AND PEP IN HIV PREVENTION

As of 2014, Canada has seen a small increase in the rate of new non-occupational HIV infections. Although populations who are at high risk of the virus, which includes intravenous drug users, members of the LGBTQ2SIA community, and sex workers, have made progress in raising awareness, the rate of infections have not decreased. Pre and post-exposure prophylaxis, PrEP and PEP, can be used as tools to end these new infections in Canada. In the mid-2000s, PEP's use was extended to include non-occupational exposures like sexual activity and injection drug use. In 2010, the first clinical trial of PrEP was published. Unfortunately, there is no information on both drugs has caused clinicians and researchers in the field of HIV prevention, like Dr. Darrell Tan, assistant professor at the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, to put together a guideline that encourages greater awareness about these game changers to battle HIV.

[Read more at Dalla Lana School of Public Health.](#)

Credit: shutterstock - 766975342

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY: ENERGY EFFICIENCY POWERS UK BACK TO 1994 LEVEL OF ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND 1/3 NOW RENEWABLE

The amount of electricity generated in UK is now equivalent to that as 1994. Although there is a population rise, UK reached "peak generation" in 2005. Since then the demand for electricity has decreased due to energy efficiency measures introduced by the EU, which reduced the amount of electricity used per person. 33.4% are renewable energy. By including renewables and nuclear energy led to 2018 being the second year that the UK generated more than half its electricity from non-carbon sources. There were greater CO2 savings from energy efficiency than from switching to renewables.

[Read more at Daily Kos.](#)



Credit: Free-Photos/pixabay



Credit: David Seroak

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS: CANADA'S GENOCIDE: THE CASE OF THE AHIARMIUT

Canada committed physical genocide against the Ahiarmiut, a small group of Inuit in 1950. The Canadian government forcefully relocated them 100 kilometres from their original home to Nunavut because the government felt that they were becoming too dependent on trade with federal employees at a nearby radio tower. The Canadian government moved the Ahiarmiut to an isolated island and did not provide them with food, shelter or tools. In order to survive, they ate bark and other scavenged food until winter. Many of them died. In 1957, they were relocated again where they were given tents, a "starvation box" that may last them for about a week. There were many more deaths. Afterwards, there were three more relocations. From 1927 to 1951, it was considered illegal for Indigenous peoples in Canada to organize or meet, making it extremely challenging to resist these brutal acts.

[Read more at The Conversation.](#)



“Last year ... 100 percent of all our investments in energy were in renewable energy,” the African Development Bank president said.”

Akinwumi Adesina,
President of the African
Development Bank, on
its climate mission

[Read more at Devex.](#)

Credit: FAO/Giulio Napolitano

EVENTS TABLE

DATES	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
January 8th	Information Sessions for Master's Programs in Island Tourism and Sustainable Island Communities at UPEI	Prince Edward Island Canada	
Mar. 8th-10th	10th annual CUGH Conference - Translation and Implementation for impact in Global Health	Chicago USA	
Mar. 20th-22nd	2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards	Baltimore USA	
April 15th-17th	Integrative Mental Health Conference	San Francisco California	
Apr. 30th – May 2nd	Public Health 2019 (CPHA)	Ottawa Canada	
May 7th-10th	International Congress on Complementary Medicine Research	Brisbane Australia	http://iccmr2019.com/
May 13th - 15th	Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB): 2019 Biennial Conference	Ottawa Canada	
May 22nd-24th	3rd International Integrative Nursing Symposium	Galway Ireland	https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/
June 10th-21st	5th McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Diseases and Global Health	Montreal Canada	



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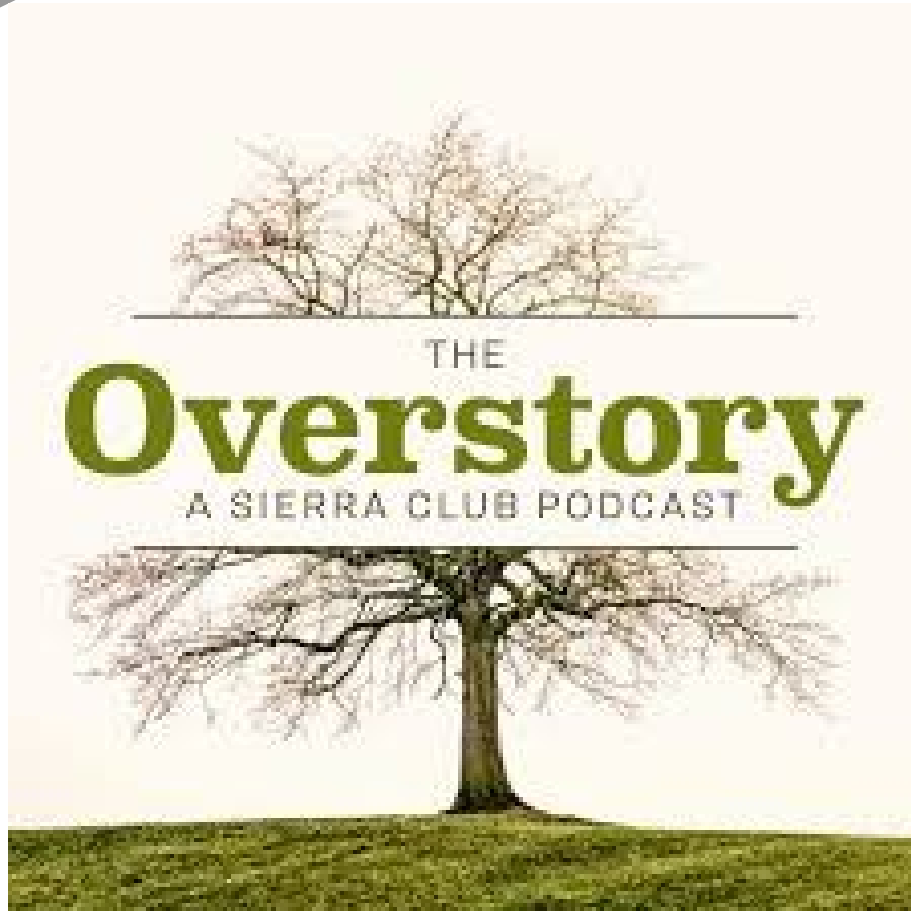
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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA

EPISODE 2 NOW ONLINE!

PODCAST: THE OVERSTORY



Credit: The Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's new podcast, *The Overstory*, provides an opportunity for changemakers, storytellers, and people who help us see the world in a different light and from a new angle a chance to share.

This episode features Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is now threatened by oil-drilling as well as a radio diary from Olympic snowboarder Justin Reiter, a conversation about equity in the outdoors with Teresa Baker, and sustainable living advice from Mr. Green.

[Listen to episode two.](#)



HOW TO USE CRITICAL THINKING TO SPOT FALSE CLIMATE CLAIMS



Credit: gerald/pixabay

There are many public discussion about climate science, which comprises of a stream of assertions. In addition to climate science being complex, it has also been targeted by deliberate obfuscation campaigns. Scholars from the University of Queensland and George Mason University published in Environmental Research Letters applied a simple method to 42 common climate-contrarian arguments and identified an error in reasoning that are independent of the science itself for every one of the 42 arguments. An example of the approach can be described in six simple steps:

1. Identify the claim
2. Construct the supporting argument
3. Determine the intended strength of the claim
4. Check the logical structure
5. Check for ambiguity
6. Check premises for truth or plausibility

[Read more at The Weather Network.](#)

A 'ROADLESS TRIP' IN A 3D-PRINTED, SOLAR-POWERED SNOW ROVER



Credit: CLEAN2ANTARCTICA

A Dutch couple, Liesbeth and Edwin ter Velde, were prepare to set out on a 3,000-mile roadless trip from Union Glacier base camp to the South Pole and back using a 52-foot-long, 3274 pound, solar-powered snow rover partially 3D-printed from waste plastic. It took about 40 3D printers to make it. Although neither traveler was an experienced engineer, Edwin designed a lightweight, honeycomb-shaped block he dubbed the HexCore using plastic found in their trash bin and a commercial 3D printer. He partnered with custom material makers DuFor and Innofil3D to put together 4,000 of them into the hull of this Solar Voyager, which is 15% upcycled plastic. The electric vehicle is powered by 10 solar panels to travel 5 mph. Since there are no heating elements inside the rover, there is a possibility that temperatures may go well below zero. Some of the key technologies that keep Solar Voyager going in frigid conditions, include infrared windows, solar vacuum tubes, solar panels, balloon tires, and bulletproof bottom.

[Read more at The Wired.](#)

THE HISTORY OF BLOOD



Credit: Max Guther

In “Nine Pints” (Metropolitan), the British journalist Rose George examines the unique biology of blood and the lore and tradition surrounding it, including its connections to the origins of the earth and of life itself. Although ancient peoples did not know the biology of it, they recognize the importance of blood. Although blood was not visible to them except for when it is flowing from a wound, or during childbirth, miscarriage, and menstruation, they see blood as a symbol of life and death. In some cultures, blood loss is perceived as a danger to the individual as well as the community. In Richard Sugg’s “Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires” (2011) book, he traces the belief in the blood’s healing powers as early as ancient Rome.

[Read more at The New Yorker.](#)



POPULAR MEXICAN BEER SWITCHES TO 100% BIODEGRADABLE 6-PACK RINGS TO SAVE WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT



Credit: 12019/pixabay

At the beginning of 2019, Good News Network reports Corona will be testing the new 100% plastic-free 6-pack rings that are harmless to wildlife and the environment, in Mexico. More than a million marine creatures and other birds and animals die from plastic trash each year. This year, Corona partnered with Parley for the Oceans to conduct cleanups that has collected more than three million pounds of plastic waste on beaches in over 15 different countries. In addition to Corona, Carlsberg Beer and Saltwater Brewery are also seeking animal and eco-friendly innovative alternatives for the earth and its inhabitants.

[Read more at Daily Kos.](#)



4 KEY STEPS TO PREPARING FOR A BUSINESS PRESENTATION



Credit: Impact Photography

For many careers, it is important to be able to effectively communicate ideas to others. Tim Calkins, a clinical professor of marketing at the Kellogg School who spent years as a brand manager for Kraft Foods and now serves as a consultant and the author of the forthcoming book *How to Wash a Chicken: Mastering the Business Presentation*, offers four recommendations to help you prepare and present with confidence. The four recommendations are:

1. Dedicate Time to Prepare
2. Figure Out Your Story
3. Make Sure Your Data Serve Your Story
4. Keep Your Language Simple and Relatable

[Read more at KelloggInsight.](#)

Robert Thompson
Executive Director, Newfoundland
and Labrador Medical Association
Medical Student Global Health
Group Workshop
Memorial University, St. John's,
Newfoundland and Labrador
January 12, 2019



Credit: David Zakus

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