



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS & GLOBAL HEALTH

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127 COUNTRIES NOW REGULATE PLASTIC BAGS. WHY AREN'T WE SEEING LESS

A new report from UN Environment and WRI found that at least 127 countries (of 192 reviewed) have adopted some form of legislation to regulate plastic bags as of July 2018. These policies range from outright bans to progressive phase-outs to laws that incentivize the use of reusable bags. Yet despite increasing regulations, plastic pollution remains a massive problem. Here are a few reasons why plastic bag regulations are not yet effective in slowing down ocean pollution:

1. Most countries fail to regulate plastic through its lifecycle.
2. Countries favor partial bans over full bans.
3. Virtually no countries restrict plastic bag manufacturing/production.
4. Exemptions are numerous.
5. Incentives are not offered for alternatives to single use plastic bags.

[Read More at World resources Institute](#)



Credit: Less Plastic Please/Facebook

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

**Tropical Cyclone Idai Storm Knows No Boundaries
A 'Mass Invasion' Of Polar Bears On A Russian Island
Why Are People Finally Believing In Climate Change** 2

**Future Of Food Under 'Severe Threat'
Medieval Diseases Are Infecting California's Homeless
'Continuity Of Care' For Chronic Conditions** 3

**The Measles Moms
India's Innovation To Tackle Pollution
Could Wahkohtowin Help Us Fix Child Welfare?** 4

Quote Of The Week On Environment & Events 5

FYI#1: Suicide Among Inuit In Canada 6

FYI#2: Wind Power On The Prairies 7

**FYI#3: How One Woman Helped Move Florida Toward
Banning Fracking** 8

FYI#4: The 10 Largest Cities In The World 9

FYI#5: Skating Race & Way Of Life Faces Extinction 10

**FYI#6: How Project Management Training Can Give
You A Career Boost** 11

Backpage: Grandfather Silverback,
Bwindi Impenetrable National
Park, Uganda

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CYCLONE IDAI SHOWS THE DEADLY REALITY OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

As Africa climate week unfurled in Ghana, the countries of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe counted the costs of Cyclone Idai, which ripped through villages and towns, taking hundreds of lives and leaving a trail of destruction. The cyclone made landfall on 14 March. After picking up speed, with winds of 195km/h (120mph) accompanied by lashing rains, Idai caused flooding and landslides, ruining crops and roads, and has already affected millions of people. The city of Beira in Mozambique had nearly 80% of its homes and public infrastructure destroyed. Even though Africa is estimated to produce just 4% of global carbon emissions – compared to 80% by the G20 countries, it is the continent that pays the highest price. For us, climate change is not a future risk, it's already a reality evident in wrecked families, lands and livelihoods, and hopeless children and young people who have no choice but to seek a future by migrating. Tired of vain promises and empty slogans, students and pupils around the world, including in Africa organized a series of rallies and events last week asking their governments to take, without delay, the decisions needed to contain climate destabilisation. [Read More at The Guardian](#)



Credit: Adrien Barbier/AFP/Getty Images



TROPICAL CYCLONE IDAI: THE STORM THAT KNEW NO BOUNDARIES

Tropical cyclone Idai has made headlines across southern Africa throughout the month of March. Lingering in the Mozambique Channel at tropical cyclone intensity for six days, the storm made landfall in Beira, Mozambique in the middle of the month, then tracked in a westerly direction until its dissipation. In recent years concerns have been growing about the impact of climate change on cyclones. Research has shown that changes to the world's temperature, as well as ocean warming, are responsible for an increase in the severity of tropical cyclones. This has recently been researched for the South Indian Ocean. As the ocean is warming, the region which experiences temperatures conducive to tropical cyclone formation is expanding and temperatures in the tropical regions are becoming warm enough for cyclone intensification. [Read More at The Conversation.](#)

See Also: [Heatwave Threatens Zimbabwe's Harvest Amid Severe Drought](#)

Credit: : Denis Onyodi/ IFRC handout

A 'MASS INVASION' OF POLAR BEARS IS TERRORIZING A RUSSIAN ISLAND TOWN; CLIMATE CHANGE IS TO BLAME

Officials in the Arkhangelsk region declared a state of emergency because of the marauding mammals. Polar bears are typically born on land but live mostly on sea ice, where they hunt and feed on seals. But as Arctic ice thins, an occurrence linked to the acceleration of climate change, the animals move ashore, ravenous. They scavenge, sometimes coming into contact with human populations. "I have been in Novaya Zemlya since 1983, but there have never been so many polar bears in the vicinity," said a local administrative head. "The people are scared. They are frightened to leave homes and their daily routines are broken. Parents are afraid to let the children go to school or kindergarten." The polar bears are battling adverse conditions of their own, driven by changing conditions in the Arctic, which is warming more than twice as fast as the rest of the planet. [Read More at The Washington Post](#)



Credit: Instagram/Irina Elis



WHY ARE PEOPLE FINALLY BELIEVING IN CLIMATE CHANGE

A record number of Americans—73%—now understand that global warming is happening. About 62% of them know that humans are mostly responsible. What is bringing this change in understanding? Is it a generational shift? Or just a whole lot of bad weather? Anthony Leiserowitz is director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication (YPCCC), which is behind this new data. Along with colleagues from George Mason University, the YPCCC has spent the last decade studying American awareness of climate change and how to shift that awareness. Leiserowitz spoke to Sierra about young Republicans, the weather report, and why it's easier to explain climate change to a person in India than to a person in the US. The US, along with Canada, Australia, and the UK are the hotspots of climate denialism. The mass media is crucial; that's how most people even come to know about this. [Read More at Sierra Club](#)

Credit: RAWPIXEL | ISTOCK



Credit: REUTERS/Ivan Alvarado

MEDIEVAL DISEASES ARE INFECTING CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESS

Infectious diseases—some that ravaged populations in the Middle Ages—are resurging in California and around the country, and are hitting homeless populations especially hard. “Our homeless crisis is increasingly becoming a public-health crisis,” California Governor Gavin Newsom said in his State of the State speech in February, citing outbreaks of hepatitis A in San Diego County, syphilis in Sonoma County, and typhus in Los Angeles County. “Typhus. A medieval disease. In California. In 2019.” New York City, where the majority of the homeless population lives in shelters rather than on the streets, has not experienced the same outbreaks of hepatitis A and typhus. But different infections occur in shelters, including tuberculosis, a disease that spreads through the air and typically infects the lungs.

[Read More at The Atlantic](#)

FUTURE OF FOOD UNDER 'SEVERE THREAT' AS SPECIES DIVERSITY DISAPPEARS

Although about 6,000 plant species can be used for food, less than 200 varieties are widely eaten, and only nine make up most of the world's total crop production. “The loss of biodiversity for food and agriculture is seriously undermining our ability to feed and nourish an ever-growing global population,” said head of the FAO. By analysing data from 91 countries, the FAO said there was “mounting evidence” the world's biodiversity was under “severe threat” due to pollution, badly managed water and land use, poor policies, over harvesting and climate change. Diversification could also help fight malnutrition globally by bringing little-known but highly nutritious foods into the mainstream. [Read More at Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)



Credit: Heidi De Marco / Kaiser Health News



Credit: PicsWe

'CONTINUITY OF CARE' FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED SETTINGS DEFINED AND IMPLEMENTED

Within the context of the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) globally, there is limited evidence on how researchers have explored the response to chronic health needs in the context of health policy and systems in low- and middle-income countries. This scoping review aims to map and describe the state of knowledge regarding how researchers in resource-constrained settings have defined and used the concept of Continuity of Care for chronic conditions in primary healthcare. A framework for CoC is suggested, acknowledging three components (i.e. longitudinal care, the nature of the patient-provider relationship and coordinated care) while considering relevant contextual factors, particularly access and quality. [Read More at Health Policy Systems/ BMC](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON OPINION

THE MEASLES MOMS

This rise in preventable diseases, like measles and whooping cough, has put a renewed focus on the anti-vaccination movement; the World Health Organization even named “vaccine hesitancy” as one of the top 10 threats to global health. What’s less discussed, though, is who decides not to vaccinate; understanding that would provide clues about how they may be persuaded to change their minds. The leaders of the anti-vaccination movement—both at home and on the national stage—are women. (Specifically, women in affluent areas.) They’re disproportionately the family members who make medical decisions about kids, they’re the most active in chat rooms, and they’re the most recognizable public faces of the anti-vaccination movement. [Read More at Medium](#)

Credit: JOE RAEDLE, GETTY IMAGES

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

ENCOURAGING TO SEE INDIA'S INNOVATION TO TACKLE POLLUTION

It's encouraging to see innovation -- a key to tackling pollution -- coming from all corners, especially developing countries like India, UN Environment acting Executive Director Joyce Msuya has said. "Policy innovation is important as well, and we have seen India excel here, not least with a major announcement to ban single-use plastics by 2022." Msuya, a Tanzanian microbiologist and environmental scientist, believes everyone can contribute to solutions to pollution. For Msuya, there is no magic fix. A range of actions must be taken by individuals, city authorities and governments, and these should be based on science.

[Read More at The Economic Times](#)



Credit: IANS/ Vishal Gulati

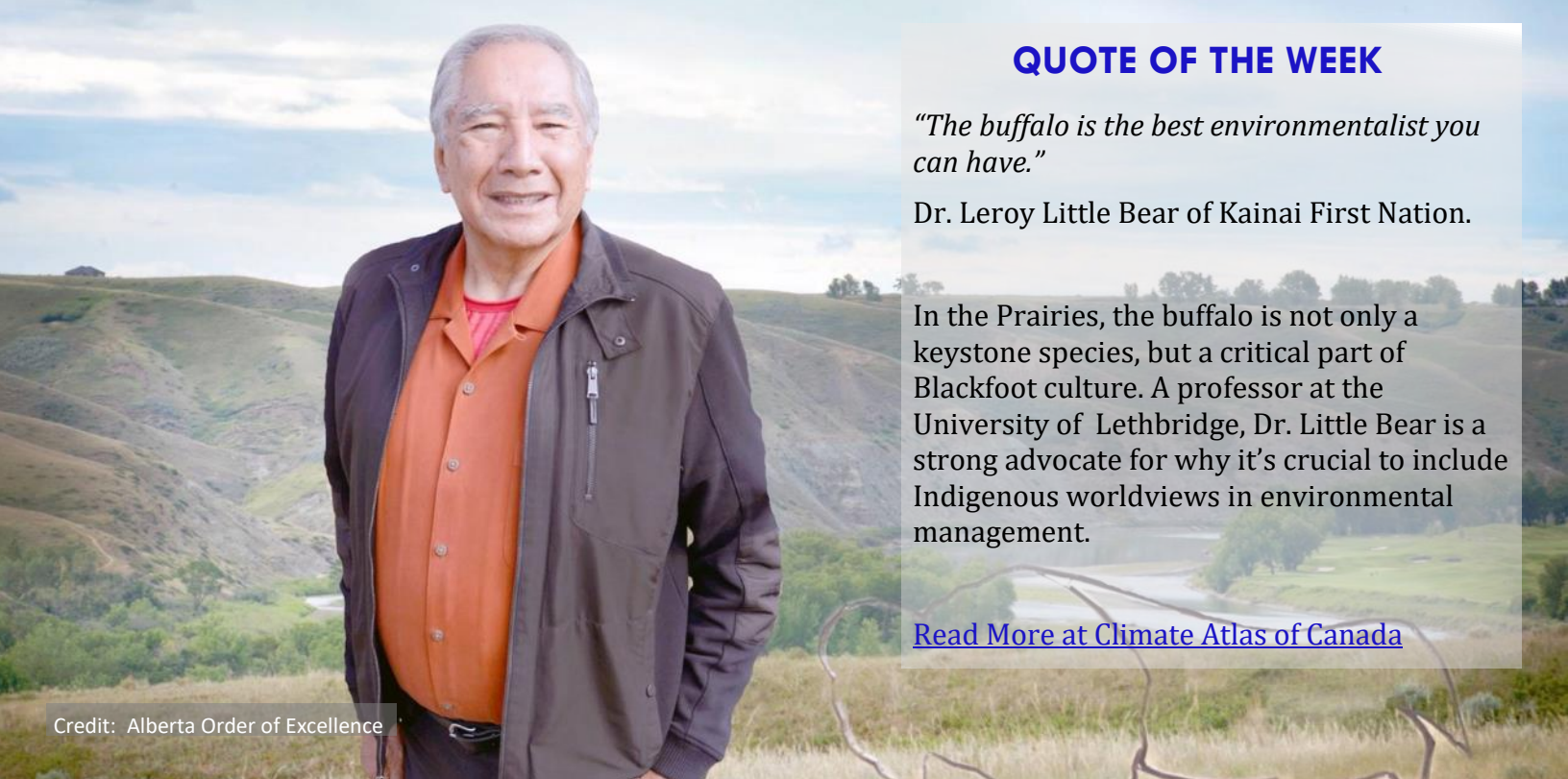


Credit: Sarah Buhler

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

COULD WAHKOHTOWIN HELP US FIX CHILD WELFARE?

Wahkohtowin, a Cree teaching about kinship, connectedness, and a responsibility to care for each other and the world, informs every area of her life, says Spillett. Including her work with children and families. Spillett has spent years working with children and families and advocating for a better life for them. She’s been recognized with awards, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Winnipeg. “I’m talking about safe community people, and supporting a community to help raise children. And not in the absence of the mom. Building a relationship, working on creating opportunities for mom to continue to have access, to continue to be involved in that child’s life.” LaBoucane-Benson, a member of the Canadian Senate and Métis has helped facilitate restorative conferences between families and child welfare bodies — called Family Group Conferencing — when a decision to apprehend a child has been made. This process allows everyone around the child to weigh in about the next step, and it’s based heavily on the idea of Wahkohtowin. [Read More at The Tyee](#)



Credit: Alberta Order of Excellence

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The buffalo is the best environmentalist you can have.”

Dr. Leroy Little Bear of Kainai First Nation.

In the Prairies, the buffalo is not only a keystone species, but a critical part of Blackfoot culture. A professor at the University of Lethbridge, Dr. Little Bear is a strong advocate for why it’s crucial to include Indigenous worldviews in environmental management.

[Read More at Climate Atlas of Canada](#)

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Mar. 25th-29th	VI Global Conference on Family Farming	Derio-Bilbao Spain	https://www.ruralforum.org/en/vi-conference/presentation
April 15th-17th	Integrative Mental Health Conference	San Francisco California	https://integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/mentalhealth.html
Apr. 30th-May 2nd	Public Health 2019 (CPHA)	Ottawa Canada	https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program
May 7th-10th	Integrative Congress on Complementary Medicine Research	Brisbane Australia	https://www.iscmr.org/content/iccmr-2019
May 13th - 15th	Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB): 2019 Biennial Conference	Ottawa Canada	https://cseb.ca/conferences/2019-conference/
May 22nd-24th	3rd International Integrative Nursing Symposium	Galway Ireland	https://www.integrativenursingsymposium.com/
June 6th-9th	CNIS Bethune Round Table in Global Surgery: Ethics in Global Surgery	Edmonton Canada	https://bethuneroundtable.com/
June 6th-9th	Society for the Advancement of Science in Africa	Toronto Canada	https://sasascience.org/conference/
June 10th-21st	5th McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Diseases and Global Health	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca
June 14th-16th	North American Refugee Health Conference	Toronto Canada	https://facmed.registration.med.utoronto.ca/portal/events/reg/participantTypeSelection.do?method=load&entityId=1469515
Oct 7th-11th	Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power	Vienna Austria	https://www.iaea.org/atoms4climate
Oct 15th-18th	Global Symposium of Citizenship, Governance and Accountability in Health	New Delhi India	http://copasahglobalsymposium2019.net/overview.html



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDE FOR INUIT IN CANADA



Credit: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

The elevated rate of suicide among Inuit in Canada is the most urgent challenge facing our people and it demands a national response. The four Inuit regions in Canada (Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Northern Labrador), collectively known as Inuit Nunangat, have rates of suicide that range from five to 25 times the rate of suicide for Canada as a whole. [Read More at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)

See Also: [Social & Economic Inequity in Inuit Nunangat](#)



WIND POWER ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES GROUNDBREAKING WIND-BATTERY STORAGE



Credit: Pinterest

“It’s been nothing but positive,” says Chief Cadmus Delorme about the Cowessess First Nation wind-battery project, located just outside of Regina, Saskatchewan. In this video, community members describe the project’s significance for environmental responsibility, community pride, and local sustainable economies. The community has now developed a 320KW solar farm on the site, making the first known wind-solar battery storage project in the country, and Chief Delorme says they’re “hungry for more.”

An energy revolution is hitting the town of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. New 800 kW wind turbines are popping up everywhere, transforming the ever-present wind into electricity that’s then used to power electric cars and off-set the communities’ reliance on fossil fuels. The move to renewables isn’t just reducing the community’s impact on the climate, it’s also sparking a whole new green economy.

[Read More at Climate Atlas of Canada](#)



HOW ONE INSPIRED WOMAN HELPED MOVE FLORIDA TOWARD BANNING FRACKING



Credit: Getty Images

Ginger and her husband watched a movie called “Dear President Obama,” and she decided she had to help Food & Water Watch ban fracking in her state. Little did she know that within years, she would get their next governor of Florida on film supporting a ban on the practice. They had a goal — to get every gubernatorial candidate to pledge to oppose the toxic, damaging practice of fracking in their state. What I found was a woman who is locked onto her mission — doing what she does as a labor of love, in a completely volunteer capacity, and fiercely determined to follow in the footsteps of other conservationists before her.

[Read More at Food & Water Watch](#)



THE 10 LARGEST CITIES IN THE WORLD



Credit: Shutterstock (Shanghai)

Urban centers have been proliferating across the world as large populations settle in cities to take advantage of better economic and educational opportunities, modern infrastructure, and other amenities. Asian cities have particularly recorded outstanding growth, and most of the largest cities are currently situated on the continent. The only African city on the list is Kinshasa.

1. Shanghai - 24.1 million
2. Beijing - 18.5 million
3. Karachi - 18 million
4. Istanbul - 14.6 million
5. Dhaka - 14.5 million
6. Tokyo - 13.6 million
7. Moscow - 13.1 million
8. Manila - 12.8 million
9. Tianjin - 12.7 million
10. Mumbai - 12.4 million.

[Read More at World Atlas](#)



IN THE NETHERLANDS, AN ICONIC SKATING RACE — AND A WAY OF LIFE — FACES EXTINCTION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE



Credit: Dimitri Georganas/Associated Press

The Elfstedentocht translates to “eleven cities tour.” It’s an ice skating race that measures about 135 miles and takes place on the canals that connect the 11 cities in the Friesland province of the Netherlands. The 110-year-old event is wildly popular — the next race is expected to attract 26,000 participants, 2 million spectators and 3,000 journalists and will surely draw the attention of nearly every person in the country — largely because of the long wait and grim forecast associated with it. The threats that climate change poses to the sports world are not theoretical, and they aren’t all looming far down the road. Scientists, sports enthusiasts and event organizers around the globe have already noticed an impact, from changes in the ocean that affect water sports and fishing, to extreme heat that has taken a toll on event scheduling and athlete training, to rising sea levels and intensifying storms that endanger communities and livelihoods. Dutch scientists recently sought to find out the likelihood that conditions will ever allow another Elfstedentocht to take place. Reaching the mandated six inches of ice typically requires two weeks of very cold weather — the type of extreme winters that are increasingly rare in the Netherlands.

[Read More at The Washington Post](#)



HOW PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING CAN GIVE YOU A CAREER BOOST



Credit: Rawpixel/Unsplash

There has been increasing demand for nonprofits to utilize project management tools to plan and outline their formulation process in order to be more accountable for the funding they receive, said Kemoy Liburd-Chow, counselor at the Embassy of St. Kitts and Nevis in the United States and certified project management professional from the Project Management Institute. “Understanding scheduling; understanding budgeting; understanding how to monitor and control; how to go about the whole planning process; the importance of managing your stakeholders; [and] assigning resources,” are all essential skills gained through project management certifications.

Experienced professionals are better equipped to go onto project management training than those who undertake training without experience. This is “because people with no real-life experience are then employed as project managers off the basis of theory, rather than understanding how it works in the real world,” said Darren Talbot, director of D2i Management and who sits on the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors U.K. Education Standards Board.

[Read More at Devex](#)



Grandfather Silverback
Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
Uganda
March 20, 2019

Credit: David Zakus

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