

WEN Nonprofit Spotlights

WEN spotlights nonprofit organizations who are helping engage the Bay Area community on environmental issues. Nominate your favorite non-profit organization for our Nonprofit Spotlight by emailing info@wencal.org.

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Current Spotlight:

Ecocity Builders

Founded in 1992, Ecocity Builders is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reshaping cities for the long-term health of human and natural systems. We develop and implement policy, design and educational tools and strategies to help build healthy and thriving urban centers and reverse patterns of sprawl and excessive consumption.

We regularly collaborate with an international network of associates plus a number of close advisors, cultivated over the course of more than forty years of consistent work by our founder, Richard Register. Building on our backgrounds, abilities and experiences, Ecocity Builders is able to influence and participate in a wide variety of conversations and projects related to the ecocity approach worldwide. We can speak to nonprofits, government leaders, scientists, educators, artists, local activists, businesses, institutions and the general public. Our strength lies in basic ecocity principles that hold up under the test of time and scrutiny, along with our considerable personal commitment to the work.

Our founder, Richard Register, defined and developed the term "ecocity" many years ago—long before "green building" and "sustainability" were even in the urban design and lifestyle vocabularies. We have been the keepers of the longest running conference series on the subject—the International Ecocity Conference Series—begun in 1990 in Berkeley and since held in Australia, Senegal, Brazil, China, India, San Francisco and Turkey. We initiate projects locally and internationally, and have been consultants locally and globally. Over the years we've advised in many countries, including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Brazil, Senegal, South Africa, Turkey, nine countries in Europe, Korea, and Australia. We have built a network of thinkers and practitioners in a wide variety of disciplines, including transportation, energy, architecture, design, natural restoration, development, planning, and advocacy. We regularly provide slideshows and lectures on the ecocity approach, as well as workshops and classes on the topic, in addition to the books written by Richard Register, our monthly newsletters and our articles for various media outlets.

One of our top priorities this year is our Berkeley Center Street Plaza project which recently took a major step forward when the Berkeley City Council voted 8-1 to endorse the project and seek funding to complete the final design work and implement. The project provides a multi-functional urban model emphasizing place-making, pedestrianism, transit use, and "low-impact design" (LID) stormwater interventions. The final design strategies, of more than thirty initial schemes, reintroduce Strawberry Creek while accommodating planning and code requirements, such as access for emergency and delivery vehicles. A pedestrian plaza with porous pavers will weave through the water features, over an underground stormwater storage cistern. The Center Street project is one example of how Ecocity Builders works with community partners and professionals to build ecocity demonstration projects: pieces of the ecocity.

Ecocity Builders nurtures great visions for healthier cities - for people and nature alike - and provides practical tools for building them. We are a nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible. Join us and help rebuild cities in balance with nature. Ecocity Builders: <http://www.ecocitybuilders.org>

Past Spotlights:

City CarShare

What is the mission of your organization?

City CarShare's mission is to improve the environment and quality of life in our communities by promoting innovative, socially responsible transportation options. By providing car sharing, and linking it to other mobility options, City CarShare reduces automobile dependence and has a measurable impact in the way our communities live, breathe, work, and play.

What is the history of the organization?

City CarShare (CCS) was started by two women. Launched in 2001 by Elizabeth Sullivan and Kate White (in partnership with many supporters), City CarShare was one of the first car share organizations in the USA. Today, City CarShare is the largest nonprofit provider in the country. Members share many types of fuel-efficient cars located at hundreds of locations, throughout San Francisco and the East Bay. Collectively CCS members drive 40,000 fewer miles on Bay Area roads everyday, saving 55 million pounds of CO2 per year. These members also save thousands of dollars over the cost of owning and operating their own car.

What is the current top priority for your organization?

City CarShare is expanding access to car sharing to low-income residents, youth educators, small local businesses and individuals who care about greening their lives. Keeping the cost of mobility affordable for residents is a high priority.

City CarShare continually strives to make its service so convenient, so reliable, and so affordable, that people will prefer

using a CCS car to owning a vehicle. In doing so, CCS members are helping to reduce traffic, parking problems, and dependence on oil-while promoting cleaner air, quieter streets, and more open space.

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

Too often, people don't realize that City CarShare is a nonprofit organization. Every dollar City CarShare makes goes back into the community. CCS supports, promotes, and advocates for many environmental, transit, and land use organizations that are working to improve the quality of life in our communities. City CarShare practices a green, transit-oriented model of car sharing. CCS encourages everyone (including its members) to walk, bike, or take public transit before using a car. While this doesn't work in a profit-making model, as a nonprofit CCS finds success when people drive fewer miles. Additionally, as a nonprofit, CCS offers programs designed to support the broader community without focusing on making an extra dollar of profit. Initiatives include a wheelchair accessible van, low and moderate-income programs, affordable housing placements and other programs for youth, students, seniors, and nonprofits. Because of this, City CarShare members not only share a fuel and emissions efficient fleet of cars, they are also connected to their local Bay Area community.

Save
the Bay

What is the mission of your organization?

Save The Bay is the largest regional organization working to protect, restore and celebrate San Francisco Bay. As its leading champion since 1961, Save The Bay protects the Bay from pollution and inappropriate shoreline development, making it cleaner and healthier for people and wildlife. We restore habitat and secure strong policies to re-establish 100,000 acres of wetlands that are essential for a healthy Bay. We engage more than 25,000 supporters, advocates and volunteers to protect the Bay, and inspire the next generation of environmental leaders by educating thousands of students annually. <http://www.saveSFbay.org>.

What is the history
of the organization?

Save The Bay was founded in 1961 by three East Bay women who were watching the Bay disappear before their eyes. Kay Kerr, Sylvia McLaughlin and Esther Gulick set out to stop

the City of Berkeley's plan to double in size by filling in the shallow Bay off-shore. They mobilized thousands of members to stop the project, and their resounding victory was repeated to prevent Bay fill projects around the region. This first modern grassroots environmental movement in the Bay Area won a revolutionary change - tens of thousands of Save The Bay members forced the State of California to acknowledge that the Bay belonged to the public. Save The Bay won a legislative moratorium against placing fill in the Bay in 1965, the McAteer-Petris Act. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) was established by the State to plan protection of the Bay, regulate shoreline development, and ensure public access, which at the time was almost non-existent.

What is the current top priority for your organization?

Save The Bay's current priority is stopping the biggest development threat to the Bay - Cargill's plan to build a city on more than 1400 acres of restorable salt ponds in Redwood City. Learn more: <http://www.saveSFbay.org/stop-cargill>

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

As the first "Save The Bay" in the country, our founders also inspired similar organizations in Chesapeake Bay, the Hudson River, Puget Sound, and Long Island Sound.

Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL) Program

What is the mission of your organization?

Generation Green educates and inspires Contra Costa County to: Reduce Our Impact on the Earth, Reuse Our Materials, Respect Our Planet, and Empower Citizens to Act Sustainable and Reduce their Carbon Footprint.

What is the history of the organization?

Since 1990, Generation Green (a 501c3 nonprofit organization) has sought to inform and encourage environmental action in Contra Costa County (CCC). Generation Green has hosted dozens of workshops and attended countless events. Our efforts have reached all segments of the community. From local arts and crafts classes to attendance at City Council meetings--our goal is to educate all residents in the county about environmental issues. Generation Green is currently the fiscal sponsor for four environmentally -conscious education programs in Contra Costa County:

- **Dumpster Diversion Project (DDP):** Discover the process of creative reuse through arts & crafts with the Dumpster Diversion Project. We promote the principles of conservation, recycling and reuse. Children and adults of all ages can enjoy using ordinary discarded materials to create unique works of art! Dumpster Diversion discusses the ways of constructing arts/crafts pieces and facilitates and inspires construction of others. Participants quickly learn that it is important to think before you toss anything away! Learn more by visiting the website: http://www.generationgreen.com/text/art_workshops.html.

- **Green Rheem:** Monthly Green Rheem film nights are a chance to socialize with friends at the historical Rheem Theatre in Moraga, CA. Participants enjoy local wine and appetizers before the film and then watch an educational environmental documentary. Organized by a collection of Lamorinda community organizations (Sustainable Moraga, Sustainable Lafayette, and Parents for a Safer Environment) attendees learn about key issues facing the health of our community. Find out about the upcoming events at <http://www.sustainablelafayette.net/events/green-rheem.html>.

- **Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL) Program:** Local Governments are taking the lead to create sustainable communities and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Contra Costa County (CCC). To facilitate, track and measure regional action, 4CL monitors activities, provides free resources and tools and provides a multimedia communications strategy that ensures best practices are shared and implemented. Elected officials and staff receive a monthly newsletter, attend workshops and share successes on line. Learn more at www.ccclimateleaders.org

- **Sustainable Contra Costa (SCOCO) :** Sustainable Contra Costa (SCOCO) provides education, inspiration and tools to individuals and organizations that help them to live and operate in a way that sustains the health and wellbeing of our society, environment, and economy. The Annual Sustainable Contra Costa Awards recognize local commitments to sustainability. Learn more at www.sustainablecoco.org.

What is the current top priority for your organization?

Contra Costa Climate Leaders (4CL) program is this year's top priority. Working to educate local elected officials and city staff on policies and ordinances that reduce GHG emissions in Contra Costa County!

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

That we have been around since 1990! A lot of folks know about our recent efforts ie. After I served as the mayor of Moraga, that's when we started the climate leaders program, http://www.cagreens.org/greenfocus/spring_09/deschambault.html. But the Dumpster Diva and our recycle art workshops

and trashy fashion shows have been around since 1990!

The Environmental Forum of Marin

What is the mission of your organization?

The Environmental Forum of Marin promotes a sustainable world through environmental education. EFM is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the environment by educating its members and the Marin citizenry about environmental issues. In furtherance of its

mission, EFM annually conducts two educational programs, Sustainable Earth Forum and Sustainable Communities Seminar, and provides continuing education for its members and the public at large.

Sustainable Communities Seminar, consisting of eight Saturday morning workshops, is the introductory program. It provides a public forum to explore the main aspects of sustainability and how sustainable practices can be incorporated at the individual, city, and county level. The more advanced Sustainable Earth Forum is geared for those with a passion for environmentalism and sustainability. It consists of eighteen one-day-a-week classes and field trips throughout Marin County focusing on the natural world and Marin ecosystems, human impact on the environment, resource management, individual and community action, and sustainability practices. Students are trained in advocacy and complete projects designed to impact county sustainability indicators. More than 100 people contribute their services to provide this comprehensive and highly regarded environmental education program.

What is the history of The Environmental Forum of Marin?

The Environmental Forum was founded in 1972 by five directors of Audubon Canyon Ranch, including Dr. Marty Griffin, to train a cadre of volunteers to be effective and influential workers and speakers in the field of environmental planning and quality. It was the first experiment of its kind in the United States, which in time became an independent entity.

What is the current top priority of The Environmental Forum of Marin?

From its early concerns with land use and planning, the Environmental Forum has expanded to address issues relating to water, waste reduction, transportation, energy, land use, environmental ethics, sustainable practices and the economics of sustainability through discussions lead by experts and practitioners in each area. It's focus today is to provide the passion, skills and opportunities for its students to be activist advocates in one or more of these areas.

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

One unknown fact about the Environmental Forum is how many of the environmental advocates active in the county

today have passed through its program.

Local Clean Energy Alliance

What is the mission of your organization?

The mission of the Local Clean Energy Alliance is enact policy and programs that advance renewable energy, demand reduction, and clean energy jobs in the Bay Area.

What is the history of the organization?

The Local Clean Energy Alliance was founded in 2007 by Bay Localize, Pacific Environment, and the SF Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club to promote Community Choice Energy in the East Bay. In May 2008, the alliance broadened its priorities to include clean energy financing and energy efficiency programs. The alliance now has regional focus, advocating for strong climate action, clean energy financing, community choice energy, and stopping power plants in the Bay Area.

What is the current top priority for your organization?

In the short term, our top priority is solidifying the regional reach of the alliance and defeating Proposition 16, the PG&E Power Grab, which goes to the voters in June 2010. Our top long term priority is creating thousands of clean energy jobs in the Bay Area through strong, equitable, and sustainable climate action and local clean energy generation.

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

We developed the method for setting municipal science-based GHG emission targets that was adopted when the Oakland City Council voted unanimously to set a preliminary target of 36% below 2005 levels by 2020.

EarthTeam

What is the mission of EarthTeam?

To create a new generation of environmental stewards and leaders by introducing into the classroom and the community environmental experiences that inspire dedication to a

healthy environment.

EarthTeam provides middle and high school students and teachers in the San Francisco East Bay area with environmental science activities in the classroom and in the field. Students learn about environmental restoration, asthma and air quality, global warming, waste reduction, and environmental multimedia skills. EarthTeam's highly qualified educators conduct a variety of in-class and after school programs that provide leadership opportunities for teens. The organization provides opportunities for teachers to showcase their students' work in the web-based Green Newsletter and on Green Screen TV, which airs on 11 Bay Area stations. EarthTeam's primary outreach is to the East Bay's low-income communities.

What is the history of EarthTeam?

EarthTeam was formed in 2000 by a coalition of educational, environmental, and governmental representatives who saw a need to provide community-based, curriculum connected environmental programs for overwhelmed high school and middle school teachers who lacked the time or resources to create such programs. Many secondary school students and teachers felt disconnected from others of similar interest and discouraged by the lack of interest in environmental issues among the general student body. EarthTeam was created to support these teachers and students in connecting with each other, increasing knowledge of pressing environmental issues, and participating in hands-on educational projects. While EarthTeam's mission has remained the same since its formation, new projects have been developed over the years as the need has arisen.

What is the current top priority for EarthTeam?

To engage youth, particularly the disenfranchised, to develop their knowledge and leadership skills for improving the environmental health of their communities.

What is one unknown fact about EarthTeam?

Chickens, possums, mice, and all kinds of insects often visit our office garden in Berkeley.

In Defense of Animals

What is the mission of your organization?

The mission of In Defense of Animals is to end animal exploitation, cruelty, and abuse by protecting, and advocating for, the rights, welfare, and habitats of animals, as well as to raise their status beyond mere property, commodities, objects, or things.

What is the history of the organization?

In 1983, veterinarian Elliot M. Katz created Californians for Responsible Research (CFRR), to end egregious animal negligence and cruelty in laboratories on the University of California, Berkeley campus. CFRR filed a lawsuit against the USDA, forcing the agency to issue a cease and desist order, fining the university \$12,000. CFRR became In Defense of Animals (IDA), whose mission expanded to ending the exploitation and cruelty of animals wherever it might exist, including puppy mills, our nation's shelters and laboratories, the fur and food industries, circuses, zoos and governmental agencies.

In addition to advocacy work, IDA has three rescue centers: Project Hope in rural Mississippi, where over 100 abused and abandoned dogs, cats, horses, pigs, and emus find safety; The Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center deep in the forests of Cameroon, Africa, where orphans of the chimpanzee bushmeat trade find sanctuary; and IDA India, with ambulances and veterinary clinics to care for, treat and spay and neuter thousands of street and "working" animals in Mumbai, India.

With the world focused on climate change, IDA has taken a leading role in the animal protection movement by partnering with the Veg Climate Alliance to illuminate the harmful effects of animal agriculture on the environment. Meat and dairy production is responsible for 51% of the human-caused greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Prominent scientists and environmental advisers to the World Bank have called for a worldwide shift to a plant-based diet, stating that it would have a more powerful impact on climate change than the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. IDA is a leader in education concerning the benefits of a plant-based diet to the environment, global warming and climate change.

To quote Jeffrey Masson, author of *When Elephants Weep*, and *Dogs Never Lie About Love*: "IDA has set the standard for integrity and results in animal advocacy. In a world in which too many look away, IDA has been on the cutting edge of front-line activism to end abuse and exploitation. No organization has done more to uphold the principles of justice for our animal friends."

What is the top priority for your organization?

We have multiple top priorities, all encompassed by this one goal: to make the world a more just and compassionate place for all our fellow beings.

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

The number of women who hold prominent positions within the organization, including our Grassroots Campaigns Director; Director of Project Hope; Director of IDA Africa, Director of IDA India, and the directors of most of our

campaigns. Two of our four Board members are women.

Amazon Wakani

What is the Mission of your Organization?

Amazon Wakani sustains and protects the customs, traditions, people and rainforest lands of the Achual, natives of the Peruvian Amazon. The Achual Community is located in the lower Peruvian Amazon and is working to protect their five thousand acres of native rainforest territories from an increasing encroachment of western culture, timber, and tourist industries. Amazon Wakani (www.amazonwakani.org) has three focus areas: Forest and Farming: Rainforest Protection—Achual Sustainable Harvests Project; Medicinal Plants and Tradition: Achual Healing Arts and Customs; Art and Handcraft: Achual Sustainable Arts Collective.

What is the history of the organization?

Amazon, Wakani, formerly known as Achual Healing Arts, has been in existence since 1995. A fluke took, Bea Agins, founder of Amazon Wakani, to the Achual Village in Peru over 14 years ago. Bea, then, working as a volunteer and staying at neighboring lodge, became stranded. A Shaman, living at that time in the remote Achual village, helped her. They became friends. Soon there after the Achual Healing Arts was established to sustain the traditional healing practices of these people, to ensure that the wisdom of her friend, the Shaman was not lost. She lived off and on, in the Rainforest for several years. Almost by accident, while cataloguing the native plants she learned their magic and curative powers. Being a Management Consultant, she was not looking to learn from plants. However, the rainforest had its way, and for a period she practiced healing arts and brought students to learn from the forest and the shaman. But her dedication to the 120 inhabitants of the village made her revert to her managerial self: She decided to do what she could to revitalize the village that was losing its economic health and traditional lore to an invasion of corporate loggers and tourism. Bea became the founder-director of Amazon Wakani, a non profit organization collaborating with the Achual and Redpal Peru to raise tropical plants for export and trees to replant 5,000 acres of dwindling rainforest. The income from the tropical fruits provide the economic means to stabilize the community.

What is the current top priority for your organization?

Our priority is the empowerment of the Achual Women. The Achual Sustainable Arts Collective will provide a means for village women to earn money by making and selling their basketry and jewelry. The Achual women are working to improve the education and medical care of their children while sustaining their cultural traditions. This project is a alliance among partners: Global Connections, Laura Hoover and Patricia Restaino, microenterprise professional with experience in women's microfinance projects and with the distribution of tribal art from around the globe; Redpal Peru, a local Peruvian NGO with expertise in Amazon Rainforest projects, and the Achual Women's Council. We are currently focused on fundraising, just seven thousand dollars shy to initiate.

What is one unknown fact about your organization?

Amazon Wakani is totally on a volunteer basis.

Strategic Energy Innovations

What is Strategic Energy Innovation's Mission?

Strategic Energy Innovation's (SEI) mission is to assist under-served markets such as schools, universities, small businesses, local governments, affordable housing agencies, and rural/agricultural communities embrace a sustainable future by assembling resources and assistance to meet their needs. We strive to help communities reduce pollution and save money through energy and resource efficiency. To do this, our staff unites people from key organizations and businesses, creating a forum for sharing issues, experiences, and solutions. Working with the issues clients raise, SEI facilitates the development and design of real-world solutions to address their needs. We like to see ourselves as a bridge to sustainability. In short, we work with the particulars of client circumstances and create programs to help them reduce energy usage, increase environmental awareness and education, save money, create jobs, and embrace a sustainable future!

What is the history of the organization?

Strategic Energy Innovations is a nonprofit organization established in 1997 out of San Rafael, CA. We are a Marin County-certified green business, and a minority, women-owned business. Over the past 12 years, we have been helping others define their needs and assemble the resources and assistance they need to embrace a future that is more energy, water, and resource efficient; contributing to better air quality and quality of life. We have developed and co-developed a variety of noteworthy projects for the Bay Area and beyond that have strengthened our presence in the community as pioneers in sustainability and efficiency efforts. Our award winning Awareness for Communities about the Environment (ACE) program is an initiative that connects at-risk youth with college interns, local businesses, elders and community leaders; providing hands-on service learning experience and training for students to become tomorrow's environmental leaders and energy professionals. SEI also functioned as lead consultant to the Marin Community Foundation on their Strategic Climate Change Initiative, providing new approaches and recommendations to address climate change within Marin's current energy and water programs. The Housing Energy Program, is an initiative in which SEI works with Southern California Edison to aggregate small affordable housing properties into larger "buyer groups" to obtain better pricing on energy efficiency services. Over the past 10 years, SEI has also been an integral player in the curriculum development, training for, and procurement of green jobs for under-represented populations through programs like our Youth at Work internships, Green Collar Jobs Training within California's Community Colleges program, Clean Energy Training for One-stop Counselors seminar, and our Green Campus programs.

What is the current top priority for Strategic Energy Innovations?

Our top priorities remain the same as when we started: finding solutions for environmental change with existing affordable housing, k-12 schools, colleges/ universities, small municipalities, and green workforce initiatives (a coalescence of all other sectors). It is critical that we continue to pioneer innovative program approaches to help underserved populations who would otherwise remain unassisted. We take pride in developing program models, fine-tuning them until they are successful and work well, and sharing them with others to replicate. We call this method the Train the Trainer/Teacher approach and use it to ensure that our programs themselves are sustainable so clients/partners can employ them at future dates without the attendance of SEI staff. Currently, we maintain several successful program models, and we're working hard to share them around the country.

One unknown fact about Strategic Energy Innovations:

SEI publishes its own in-house cookbook at the end of each year, filled with staff recipes from our monthly potlucks!

350.org

What is 350.org's Mission?

350.org's mission is to organize an International Day of Climate Action this October 24, 2009. Over 1,200 events are already planned at iconic places around the world, from the Taj Mahal to the Pyramids to the Golden Gate Bridge. Each event is linked with a simple message: 350. 350 parts per million is the safe level of Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere according to the latest science, and it's the target world leaders should commit to when they sign a new international climate treaty in December. 350 is quickly becoming a global symbol for climate action -- register or join an event in your community at <http://350.org>.

What is the history of the organization?

350.org launched in 2008 as a small band of online organizers and environmental writer Bill McKibben. It's now expanded to become a coalition of hundreds of organizations across the planet and has staff on every continent.

What is the current top priority for 350.org?

Building a global movement that can work for an international climate treaty that does what science says is necessary, reducing CO2 to 350 parts per million.

One unknown fact about 350.org:

We're a small team! With only 7 core staff (one for each continent) and 20 field organizers scattered across the planet we rely on our supporters, you, to lead this movement by taking action in their own community.

International Rivers

What is International Rivers' Mission?

International Rivers' mission is to protect rivers and defend the rights of communities that depend on them. We oppose destructive dams and the development model they advance, and encourage better ways of meeting people's needs for water, energy and protection from damaging floods. To achieve this mission, we collaborate with a global network of local communities, social movements, non-governmental organizations and other partners. Through research, education and advocacy, International Rivers works to halt destructive river infrastructure projects, address the legacies of existing projects, improve development policies and practices, and promote water and energy solutions for a just and sustainable world. The primary focus of our work is in the global South.

What is the history of the organization?

Seeking to protect the world's rivers from destructive dams and amplify the voices of dam-affected communities, a small group of volunteers formed International Rivers Network in 1985. Their vision was simple and yet remarkably ambitious: to develop a worldwide network of people working to protect rivers and promote just and sustainable water and energy development.

Today, almost everywhere that a big dam is being planned or built there is organized local opposition. In communities where existing dams have created severe problems, dam-affected people are demanding reparations. International Rivers stands with these people, providing advice, training and technical assistance, and advocating on their behalf with governments, banks, companies and international agencies. The rate of large dam construction has fallen by half since our founding along with a dramatic increase in worldwide understanding of the need for better options.

What is the current top priority for International Rivers?

We are involved in campaigns to stop the building of large environmentally destructive dams in the Amazon, Chilean Patagonia, and the Mekong River in Southeast Asia. Scientific research has also revealed that river-wrecking dams are major greenhouse gas emitters – in some cases producing more greenhouse gases than even coal fired power plants. We've also worked to stop the spread of fake carbon offset credits and our work was instrumental in removing 122 million tons of fake carbon credits from the market, forcing polluters to actually cut their emissions instead of trading those fake credits. That's the equivalent of all of California's vehicle emissions for a year.

One unknown fact about International Rivers:

We throw some really fun events: lunches, receptions, and of course, film screenings like the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival. Visit www.internationalrivers.org/events

Rainforest Action Network

What is Rainforest Action Network's Mission?

Rainforest Action Network (RAN) campaigns for the forests, their inhabitants, and the natural systems that sustain life by transforming the global marketplace through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action. Dubbed 'some of the most savvy environmental agitators in the business' by the Wall Street Journal, RAN uses hard-hitting markets campaigns to align the policies of multinational corporations with widespread public support for environmental protection. We believe that logging ancient forests for copy paper or destroying an endangered ecosystem for a week's worth of oil is not just destructive, but outdated and unnecessary.

What is the history of the organization?

Since it was founded in 1985, RAN has been working to protect rainforests and the human rights of those living in and around these forests. From the beginning, RAN has played a key role in strengthening the worldwide rainforest

conservation movement through supporting activists in rainforest countries as well as organizing and mobilizing consumers and community action groups throughout the United States.

In our first direct-action campaign, we led a nationwide boycott of Burger King. Burger King was importing cheap beef from tropical countries where rainforests are denuded to provide pasture for cattle. After sales dropped 12% during the boycott in 1987, Burger King cancelled \$35 million worth of beef contracts in Central America and announced that they had stopped importing rainforest beef.

Almost 25 years later, RAN is more effective than ever. We work with environmental and human rights groups in 60 countries, sharing information and coordinating powerful campaigns to protect endangered rainforests, to stand in solidarity with forest inhabitants and to turn the climate crisis into a clean energy future.

What is the current top priority for RAN?

RAN is focusing on some of the key issues of our time: protecting the world's last remaining tropical forests; eliminating the worst driver's of climate change - coal, oil and rainforest destruction; and promoting human rights.

One unknown fact about RAN:

We throw great parties; check out this year's REVE: in October at www.ran.org. Hint: the staff does a wicked dance to Michael Jackson's Thriller.

Center for Resource Solutions

What is the Center for Resource Solutions' Mission?

Center for Resource Solutions (CRS) creates policy and market solutions to advance sustainable energy. The main focus of CRS is increasing the supply and adoption of renewable energy in the US. It does this chiefly through market mechanisms that allow consumers and businesses the ability to buy renewable energy with confidence, as well as through policy development at the state, regionally, and national levels to create incentives and remove the barriers to building clean energy nationally.

What is the history of the organization?

CRS was founded in 1997 under the leadership of renewable energy expert Jan Hamrin to guide the industry in the design and implementation of programs to increase the demand and use of renewable energy around the world. Dr. Hamrin and others involved in the creation of CRS believed that one of CRS's primary roles would be as a networking organization that would act as a catalyst for the development of new programs and the implementation of new policies in the rapidly changing energy sector.

In the late nineties, as California and several northeastern states began to restructure their electricity markets, many companies moved to market and sell renewable energy to a newly opened consumer base. Yet there were no standards or definitions for renewable energy in place to ensure quality, or reliable and responsible renewable energy production and sales. CRS, in its growing role as a leader in the renewable energy marketplace, coordinated the communication between stakeholders to identify what the industry could do to address this problem. Out of this communication, the Green-e Energy certification program was born. Green-e has since become one of CRS's most important and largest programs, and has become a powerful, influential and important tool for consumer and environmental protection in the national renewable energy market. Today, Green-e Energy certifies over two-thirds of the voluntary renewable energy market, and has launched two other certification and verification programs under the Green-e brand: Green-e Climate, a certification for retail carbon offsets sold on the voluntary market, and Green-e Marketplace, which licenses the Green-e logo to organizations that purchase certified renewable energy and services to those organizations that want to reduce

the environmental impact of their activities.

CRS's policy work currently focuses on working intimately with governments and non-governmental organizations across the globe to provide expert assistance and to promote renewable energy through policy development, education and market building.

What is the current top priority for Center for Resource Solutions?

Over the last several years, renewable energy facilities in the US have been built at an unprecedented pace, as governments, businesses, and individuals have voiced their demand for clean energy. Currently, nearly 30 states have a goal to increase the amount of renewables in their energy portfolios, and businesses and consumers in 47 states have the option to purchase green power from their utilities or power suppliers. In 2007, this group of individuals and organizations was responsible for purchasing about 18 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of renewable energy, an increase of more than 50% over the previous year. But current state and federal legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gases from the energy generation, transportation, and manufacturing sectors may have the perverse result of negating the environmental impact of renewable energy purchases by allowing greenhouse gas emitters to emit more as clean energy generation increases. CRS is working hard at this crucial moment, when the rules are being written for the most ambitious plans in our history to reduce our carbon footprint, to ensure that clean energy continues to be a part of the solution.

One unknown fact about Center for Resource Solutions:

Besides being ardent environmentalists, CRS staff members are mean karaoke competitors.

Connect the Dots

What is the mission of Connect the Dots?

Connect the Dots is a nonprofit effort dedicated exclusively to helping nonprofit organizations lower their environmental footprint. Our Green Start program helps nonprofit organizations realize immediate reductions in water usage, energy consumption and waste production. Our clients save on operating costs, which in turn encourages them to investigate and pursue other greening projects beyond Green Start.

What is the history of the organization?

The idea of reducing the environmental impact of nonprofits arose as we volunteered for community relief programs around San Francisco and consistently found their green practices lacking. We noticed that while individuals within nonprofits set up recycling programs or commit to buying fair trade coffee, these efforts are often piecemeal and undertaken in spare time as opposed to being a part of systemic organizational change. As a result, actions remain isolated and unable to affect formal, cultural change across the organization. We developed and test piloted the Green Start program at Hamilton Family Center, a San Francisco-based organization promoting independent living in low-income families. The compelling results from this pilot launched Connect the Dots to move the nonprofit community more efficiently and expediently along the path towards environmental sustainability.

What is the current top priority for Connect the Dots?

Especially during these tough economic times, we are stepping up our services to help more nonprofits save money and diminish their ecological footprint. We are specifically focused on:

- Reaching out to nonprofit organizations managing their own facilities, especially those serving vulnerable population, to let them know about Green Start;
- Engaging philanthropic sponsors (foundations, businesses, or individuals) to fund our Green Start implementation at a nonprofit facility. It's a gift that truly keeps on giving as the recurring savings, environmental and financial, continue to benefit the nonprofit organization years after Green Start completes.

One unknown fact about Connect the Dots:

We're tickled to be one of 20+ authors from around the world to contribute to a global handbook sharing practical information on how nonprofit organizations can become more green. This book is set to publish later this year by John Wiley and Sons.

San Francisco Green Drinks

What is the mission of SF Green Drinks?

SF Green Drinks is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that actively promotes green networking, education, and volunteer events in the SF Bay Area. SF Green Drinks's mission is to be the eco-conscious hub, both on and offline, for local individuals, organizations, and businesses that aim to strengthen and support the local environmental and green community.

What is the history of the organization?

SF Green Drinks was founded in 2003 with the simple desire to provide a networking opportunity for environmental professionals. From entry-level job seekers to upper-level professionals, a diverse mixture of intelligent locals became the core attendees of SF Green Drinks. Average attendance has grown dramatically from 20 people in the early years to well over 300; we are now one of the largest monthly gatherings of green professionals in the country. This naturally evolving social phenomenon demonstrates the thirst for connection, knowledge, and opportunity that exists across the Green Drinks network.

What is the current top priority for SF Green Drinks?

To better serve the exploding green community in the bay area, SF Green Drinks is working on these three top priorities for Summer 2009:

- Breaking in our new venue at 111 Minna on the first Tuesday of every month.
Check out the debut event
- Launching our website www.sfgreendrinks.org
- Expanding our community by promoting volunteer and knowledge exchange opportunities

One unknown fact about SF Green Drinks?

We are only one of 494 cities in the world to host a Green Drinks!

Community Clinics Initiative

Joint Project of Tides and The California Endowment

What is the Mission of Tides' Community Clinics Initiative?

The Community Clinics Initiative (CCI) is a grantmaking organization that is housed at Tides and funded through The California Endowment. CCI is committed to attaining health equity for traditionally underserved communities through field

building, collaboration, learning and reflection.

What is the history of the organization?

CCI began in 1999 as a one-time grants program to help community clinics and health centers in California with the Y2K conversion for their information systems. What blossomed from this initial investment was a lasting partnership between The California Endowment and Tides to strengthen the capacity of community clinics and health centers across the state. Since 1999, CCI has disbursed nearly \$70 million in direct grants to clinics across the state. These grants have supported information systems and technology-enabled quality improvement efforts, leadership development, fund development, capital campaigns, green buildings and green healthcare, and field building efforts.

Over the past two years, CCI has engaged community clinic leaders in a dialogue about what the future of community health will look like and how clinics will position themselves moving forward into that future. Out of these conversations, what we have developed a grants program called Networking for Community Health. This program is designed to help clinics build their capacity to catalyze, manage and sustain networking efforts with partners outside their organization to help them become true centers for community health.

In addition to the Networking for Community Health program, we are also utilizing health information technology and data and research to improve the quality of care provided and the health of the population, as evidenced by the support of patient care management and cross-institutional data exchange systems. Our program also focuses on how to support clinics that are pursuing the integration of physical and behavioral health care as a model of care to best treat the whole person.

What is the current top priority of the Community Clinics Initiative?

As referenced above, the current priority for CCI is the Networking for Community Health program. Community clinics and health centers can be effective promoters of broad community health focused on promoting health equity in underserved communities across California. The Networking program was created to support clinics in reaching this goal as well as the development of community-wide green strategies to promote health and sustainable development. In addition, the program seeks to strengthen leadership among community clinics and health centers to engage in organizing and movement building to achieve health justice, as evidenced by participation of clinic staff, volunteers, patients and other local residents in learning communities, cross-community awareness building and involvement with other policy organizations.

The following is a spotlight on some of the community clinic grantees from our Networking for Community Health program that might be of interest to this audience of the Women Environmental Network:

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Green health care education and pharmaceutical take-back program, including a community-wide green health fair with local environmental and health care groups. (rural Bay Area)

-

Project HEAL- Enabling the voices of their community through education, advocacy, and civic engagement on healthcare and environmental concerns. (Los Angeles)

-

Community garden; obesity & diabetes prevention; focus on physical activity and nutrition, utilizing promotores and community-based participatory research. (rural Bay Area)

-

Advocacy training; data analysis to inform land use planning; health promotion programs including walking and a community garden. (CA Central Valley)

-

Participatory research, collaboration with a local environmental justice group and other community organizations to address health concerns related to ocean-borne illnesses, specifically Hepatitis A. (San Diego Co.)

-

Using promotores model/neighborhood education sessions/green projects such as gardens for sustainable nutrition campaign in the Canal neighborhood. (rural Bay Area)

-

Community action research on the connection between pesticides and reproductive health to increase community knowledge and advocate for systems change. (CA Central Coast)

-

Organizing for food systems change, including health education, creating a certified organic farmers market and promoting community gardens. (Bay Area)

What is one unknown fact about the Community Clinics Initiative?

CCI is a staff of nine people, half of which have Mid-Western roots, half of which have previously worked in a community clinic, and all who have a passion for social justice and progressive social change. Also, we all love to travel and eat tasty food!

Tri-Valley CAREs

What is the Mission of Tri-Valley CAREs?

Tri-Valley CAREs' overarching mission is to promote peace, justice and a healthy environment by pursuing the following five interrelated goals:

1. Convert Livermore Lab from nuclear weapons development and testing to socially beneficial, environmentally sound research.
2. End all nuclear weapons development and testing in the United States.
3. Abolish nuclear weapons worldwide, and achieve an equitable, successful non-proliferation regime.
4. Promote forthright communication and democratic decision-making to public policy on nuclear weapons and related environmental issues, locally, nationally, globally.
5. Clean up the radioactive and toxic pollution emanating from the Livermore Lab and reduce the Lab's environmental and health hazards.

What is the history of Tri-Valley CAREs?

Since its inception in 1983, Tri-Valley CAREs has strengthened global security by preventing the further development of nuclear weapons and working tirelessly for their elimination. The group was founded by concerned neighbors living around the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of two locations where all U.S. nuclear weapons are designed. Past examples of success are:

- We led a successful campaign to shut down the Lab's existing waste incinerator.

- We stopped Livermore Lab from building a massive new toxic and radioactive waste incinerator.
- We won improvements in the Lab's program to clean up contaminated groundwater and soil.
- We played a key role in convincing Congress to stop the funding for two new nuclear bombs that were under development at Livermore Lab.

What is the current top priority of Tri-Valley CAREs?

In 2008-2009, our top two priorities are:

- 1) Terminating activities at Livermore Lab involving highly radioactive plutonium. This has the dual purpose of protecting the Bay Area's health and environment as well as stopping nuclear weapons work at the lab.

- 2) Preventing Livermore Lab from operating a new bio-warfare agent research facility. This will protect our health and environment while fully supporting the international Biological Weapons Convention, which is the treaty aimed at preventing the development and spread of bio-weapons.

What is one unknown fact about Tri-Valley CAREs?

We have the best, most dedicated, most well-motivated and all-around coolest volunteers in the entire universe. Many of our community members and volunteers have been active with Tri-Valley CAREs since the 1980s, while others are brand new with the group. Their contributions make a difference. Kudos to them all!

The Breakthrough Institute

What is the Breakthrough Institute's Mission?

The Breakthrough Institute is a small think tank with big ideas. Breakthrough is committed to creating a new progressive politics, one that is large, aspirational, and asset-based. We believe that any effective politics must speak to core needs and values, not issues and interests, and we thus situate ourselves at the intersection of politics, policy, philosophy, and the social sciences.

What is the history of the organization?

The Breakthrough Institute was founded in 2003 by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Norhaus with the tagline, "the Era is Small Thinking is Over," representing a desire to break from complaint-based issue organizing, which, they argued, puts thinkers and advocates into thought silos. One year later Shellenberger and Norhaus wrote "The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World," which triggered a national debate in the pages of the New York Times, Grist.org, the American Prospect, and the Chronicle of Philanthropy about the future of environmentalism and interest group liberalism. (Grist's summary of the debate is available online: <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-intro/>).

Between 2005 and 2008, the Breakthrough Institute was involved in a number of initiatives including:

- Health Care for Hybrids (2005) - a policy initiative to achieve energy independence and revitalize the American auto industry
- Global Warming Preparedness proposal (2005) - in response to hurricane Katrina, a proposal for preparing vulnerable communities worldwide to deal with our changing planet
- Clean Energy investment platform (2007) - presented a \$300 billion clean energy investment platform to Barack Obama's presidential campaign team

The Breakthrough Institute's founders and fellows have also published in a variety of forums. A complete history of the organization and its accomplishments is available at the Breakthrough Institute's website.

What is the current top priority for the Breakthrough Institute?

Over the next year, Breakthrough will work to seize today's historic moment to establish a new era of progressive governance that prioritizes major, long-term government investments in technology to make clean energy cheap.

One unknown fact about the Breakthrough Institute:

Breakthrough's founders, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus are also managing partners of American Enviro-nics, a social values and consulting firm committed to bringing cutting edge social science tools to inform social change strategies with the goal of creating a politics that grows self-expression and fulfillment values in the culture.

KyotoUSA

What is KyotoUSA?

KyotoUSA is an all volunteer, non-profit, grassroots organization that encourages U.S. cities, their residents, and their institutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate disruption.

What is the history of the organization?

KyotoUSA was co-founded in 2004 by Tom and Jane Kelly, together with 22 friends and colleagues, to work with cities and their residents to implement local climate protection plans. They initiated Berkeley's resolution in January 2005 to become the first U.S. city to "ratify" the Kyoto Protocol and to set Berkeley a goal of reaching climate neutrality. They achieved a similar result in Santa Cruz and, in February 2005, Mayor Greg Nickels of Seattle used the KyotoUSA concept as the basis for his national effort to implement climate protection campaigns throughout the U.S. That effort, spurred by KyotoUSA's Berkeley program now has over 900 participating cities. Tom and Jane have developed a great network of professional, academic and political supporters throughout the East Bay who have contributed their time to develop all of KyotoUSA's projects. KyotoUSA is a sponsored project of the Sequoia Foundation.

What is the current top priority for KyotoUSA?

The group's current focus is the HELIOS (Helios Energy Lights Our Schools) Project to install renewable energy systems on all the public schools in California while making the projects cost-neutral for the school districts. A pilot project was just completed at Washington Elementary School in Berkeley through a partnership between community members, the City, the University and other partners. The 103 KW photovoltaic system will supply all of the School's electricity needs and will include a curriculum element. KyotoUSA is now working with the Ecology Center to develop a Community Climate Fund to leverage subsequent solar school installations. This project sets the stage for many more such efforts around the Bay Area, California and the country. See <http://www.kyotousa.org/> for details.

One unknown fact about KyotoUSA:

In April 2005, Tom and Jane were invited by the Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference to represent KyotoUSA at a Climate Change event in the Arctic called Arctic Wisdom. Together with 1,000 Inuit people, as well as Salma Hayek and Jake Gyllenthal, they formed part of a human aerial drawing of the words Arctic Warning on the frozen Frobisher Bay. Tom was in the second "n" and Jane was in the "w".

Find out more:

To find out more or to support KyotoUSA's efforts, visit <http://www.kyotousa.org/>

Natural Resources Defense Council

What is NRDC's Mission?

The Natural Resources Defense Council's purpose is to safeguard the Earth: its people, its plants and animals and the natural systems on which all life depends.

We work to restore the integrity of the elements that sustain life -- air, land and water -- and to defend endangered natural places. We seek to establish sustainability and good stewardship of the Earth as central ethical imperatives of human society. NRDC affirms the integral place of human beings in the environment. We strive to protect nature in ways that advance the long-term welfare of present and future generations.

We work to foster the fundamental right of all people to have a voice in decisions that affect their environment. We seek to break down the pattern of disproportionate environmental burdens borne by people of color and others who face social or economic inequities. Ultimately, NRDC strives to help create a new way of life for humankind, one that can be sustained indefinitely without fouling or depleting the resources that support all life on Earth.

What is the history of the organization?

NRDC was founded in 1970 by a group of law students and attorneys at the forefront of the environmental movement. NRDC lawyers helped write some of America's bedrock environmental laws. Today, our staff of more than 300 lawyers, scientists and policy experts -- a MacArthur "genius" award-winner among them -- work out of offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing. We use law, science and the support of 1.2 million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

What is the current top priority for NRDC?

NRDC works on a broad range of issues as we pursue our mission to safeguard the Earth; its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends. As an institution, we have six main priorities:

- Curbing Global Warming
- Moving America Beyond Oil
- Saving Wildlands Across the Americas
- Reviving Our Oceans
- Stemming the Tide of Toxic Chemicals
- Speeding the Greening of China

One unknown fact about NRDC:

Worth Magazine has named NRDC one of America's 100 best charities, and the Wise Giving Alliance of the Better Business Bureau reports that NRDC meets its highest standards for accountability and use of donor funds.

Greenbelt Alliance

What is Greenbelt Alliance's Mission?

Greenbelt Alliance protects open spaces by helping cities and counties adopt policies to prepare for future growth while preserving the greenbelt. They create vibrant places through endorsement of development projects within existing cities that provide homes for people of all income levels within walking distance to shops, jobs and transit, forming walkable neighborhoods. Greenbelt Alliance also works to get people involved by educating and mobilizing residents to give them a voice in choosing how their communities grow.

What is the history of the organization?

In 1958, Dorothy Erskine, Jack Kent and colleagues founded Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks (CRRP), an organization of environmentally concerned individuals and groups that would later become Greenbelt Alliance. For 50 years, Greenbelt Alliance has worked with local communities and partner groups to help secure long-term protection for more than 1.1 million acres of open space, and establish urban growth boundaries around 26 cities and five counties. Greenbelt Alliance helped protect the Marin Headlands and Angel Island, in addition to these other noteworthy places:

- Cowell Ranch, Contra Costa County (2002)

- Bear Creek Redwoods, Santa Clara County (2000)
- Pleasanton Ridge, Alameda County (1993)
- Fort Funston, San Francisco (1961)

What is the current top priority for Greenbelt Alliance East Bay Field Office?

The Concord Naval Weapons Station, located directly adjacent to the threatened Pittsburg hills, is one of the largest remaining developable areas in the entire nine-county Bay Area region. The Concord Naval Weapons Station project serves as a rare opportunity to create positive development while also protecting key habitat, creating a model for a vibrant, walkable community adjacent to protected open space. The final plan governing the type and intensity of development and the amount of park land will be determined in early 2009. Find out more on Greenbelt Alliance's Concord Naval Weapons Station webpage.

One unknown fact about Greenbelt Alliance:

71% of the staff are amazing, talented women!