

### Good News for Our Mother Earth

- In a stunning victory, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on April 23rd in *County of Maui v. Hawai'i Wildlife Fund* solidifies the Clean Water Act's importance as one of the nation's most effective environmental laws. The Court flatly rejected the Trump administration's polluter-friendly approach to the Clean Water Act and its request to exempt wastewater discharges that flow indirectly to rivers, lakes, and oceans.
- The manufacturer of the highly toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos says it will end production by the end of 2020, following years of pressure and litigation from NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). This is a huge victory for the health of farmers, children in agricultural communities, and people across the country.
- A federal court stood with NRDC, ruling against an Environmental Protection Agency directive that effectively banned many independent scientists from serving on the agency's advisory boards and stacked the deck in favor of polluters and other industry interests. It's a major victory for good science, truth-based governance, and public health.
- A Kansas-based power company has abandoned plans to build a new coal-fired power plant. There are 200 fewer coal plants in the US than there were a decade ago, and the amount of US electricity provided by coal has dropped by a third in that time.

### How Is COVID-19 Affecting Our Earth?

Here's more good news from various news sources:

- The global shutdown caused by the virus has inadvertently become the biggest experiment ever in the reduction of greenhouse gases, with much less air pollution because of less driving, flying, and manufacturing
- Less water pollution because of less industrial activity
- More home cooking means more healthy eating and hopefully less processed food consumed
- More individuals are exercising outdoors and appreciating Earth's beauty
- Wildlife are returning to areas where they haven't been seen for years

- Increasing animal adoptions in some areas, as people seek companionship
- More families planting vegetable gardens yielding fresher, healthier produce. Watch an informative presentation at:  
<https://greenamerica.org/story/grow-climate-solutions-webinar?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=34fb65c9-1779-4c8c-8770-428701f61beb>

Some bad news from various news sources:

- More trash in landfills from take-out food and medical waste
- Surge in domestic violence due to lockdown conditions even as general crime statistics are down
- The EPA announced significantly relaxed pollution regulations, citing coronavirus hardships; plants and factories can now indefinitely determine their own ability to meet legal requirements on reporting air and water contaminants.

### Will We See a High Birthrate 9 Months from Now?

With couples being cloistered together, some suggested a global "baby bump." The following excerpted article is quite interesting:

The relationship between high-mortality events and future fertility patterns is well-established in the academic literature. Events that cause a large increase in deaths tend to cause a large decrease in births *nine months later*. This relationship holds up for influenza outbreaks in 1889, 1918, France since 1950, and the U.S. since 2003. It holds up across three major hurricanes in the U.S. and two large hurricane outbreaks. It fits the case of Ebola mortality in West Africa, an earthquake in Japan, three French heatwaves, the last large famine in Finland in 1868, as well as the entire distribution of winter mortality and summer fertility in Iceland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Across numerous contexts, lots of death leads to fewer conceptions, and thus fewer births nine months later. Social distancing measures which lead to income losses for some households, could reduce birth rates. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that today's quarantines may be leading to more divorces than babies.

[Read the entire article at <https://ifstudies.org/blog/will-the-coronavirus-spike-births> by Lyman Stone, Institute for Family Studies, Virginia]

## United States' Environmental Movement Timeline

1962 – Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* is published.

1963 – Clean Air Act becomes law offering federal research money to reduce air pollution

1969 – coverage of massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA, shows dead animals washing ashore; fire on Cleveland's Cuyahoga River focuses attention on chemical waste disposal

1970 – first Earth Day celebrations; Clean Air Act of 1970 increases standards of the 1963 law; EPA begins operating with a mandate to protect the quality of air, water, and land.

1972 – Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 is revised becoming known as the Clean Water Act; Marine Mammal Protection Act passes

1973 – Endangered Species Act passes

1976 – Toxic Substances Control Act authorizes EPA to regulate dangerous chemicals

1977 – Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act bans surface coal mining within any national parks

1984 – Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments added to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act minimizing the overall amount of hazardous waste

1990 – Clean Air act amended to include standards for acid rain, ozone layer depletion, and toxic pollutants not previously included

2009 – United Nations recognizes April 22 as International Mother Earth Day

2016 – 175 nations sign the Paris Climate Agreement at UN headquarters

2019 – Trump administration significantly revises the Endangered Species Act; US begins withdrawing from Paris Agreement.

2020 – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day; The Earth Day Network and the Canopy Project set goal of planting 7.8 billion trees – one for every human on Earth.

For more information about this project, go to: <https://www.earthday.org/campaign/the-canopy-project/>  
[from: USA Today Network special section, April 19, 2020]

### Emerson Center Film Series Postponed

The newly formed film series had to be postponed, but its committee plans films in the fall and next spring on a variety of social justice topics. Be sure to read the Congregational Record for more details. If you'd like to be involved with film selection and presentation, contact Patty Walker or Nancy Stiefel.

Explore Audubon's "Enjoy the Birds" at:

[https://www.audubon.org/joy-of-birds?ms=policy-adv-sms-x-x-20200316\\_joy-of-birds\\_sms](https://www.audubon.org/joy-of-birds?ms=policy-adv-sms-x-x-20200316_joy-of-birds_sms)

### Update on Juliana v. US Government

On January 18, a divided U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued two decisions in *Juliana v. United States* that found for the 21 *Juliana* plaintiffs in nearly every respect, but ultimately ruled that the courts cannot stop the government from harming children with its policies that cause climate change. [Read full press release here.](#)

The majority decision of Judges Hurwitz and Murguia "reluctantly" found that the youths' case should not proceed to trial, primarily reasoning that federal courts are not equipped to order or enforce a science-based climate recovery plan like that requested by the 21 brave plaintiffs. The dissenting opinion of Judge Staton, disagreeing with the majority decision, ruled that the climate recovery plan requested by the youth, while complex and involved, was manageable by the courts, and that the constitutional case should proceed to trial.

[from: Our Children's Trust website]

### Final 1619 Project Workshop Cancelled

But you can request the final handout from Andrew Sorbo, and he is even willing to respond to questions or read your comments after you've read it. Reach him at [andrew.sorbo535@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.sorbo535@gmail.com)

### The Cost of America's Online Shopping

Business is booming at Amazon and other companies in the "logistics industry," but their workers suffer under dangerous working conditions, low wages, and polluted environments. The proliferation of warehouses in the economically depressed region of San Bernardino County, CA, has provided jobs, but at a high cost from toxic diesel fumes from the countless semis, trains, and planes.

Online shopping does not have to fuel climate change or exploit communities. Workers are demanding companies like Amazon, Walmart, and Target clean up their dirty operations in these ways:

1. Create guaranteed living-wage jobs
2. Use zero-emission electric trucks
3. Provide free air filters for nearby families and businesses.

[from: *Earthjustice Quarterly Magazine*, Spring 2020, by Jessica A. Knoblauch]