



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

MARCH / APRIL 2021 VOLUME 49, NO. 2

Get Paid for Working To Pass a Carbon Fee & Dividend Bill

by Mark Welsch, NFP's Omaha Coordinator and CCL's Omaha Chapter Co-Leader

I'm going to start by asking for your help, and then explain why you should. (You'll earn money.)

If you haven't already, please join us in solving the climate change crisis by going to cclcalls.org. This legislative lobbying resource is provided by our partner, Citizens' Climate Lobby. After you sign up, you will get one email or text message (your choice) per month to remind you to call your

members of Congress—to tell them you expect them to take action that will stop the burning of fossil fuels.

Your phone is a potent tool for participatory democracy. Sounds scary, but it's easier than you think. You will talk to a staff member in your representative's office or get a recording. To make sure you get a recording, call before or after business hours. They won't quiz you. They will simply ask for your name and address, and then take notes as you express your concerns based on the talking points we'll provide you. That's it!

Members of Congress DO listen to what people say when they call. They listen the most if MANY people are calling and asking them to do the same thing. You can't be silent and expect good legislation to be passed. The loud minority is telling them to do nothing. We need the silent majority to be silent no more. It takes about five minutes per month to make a call. Join us for the sake of your children and grandchildren who are the ones who will suffer the most if we don't stop the climate from changing.

And if we get a Carbon Fee and Dividend bill passed into law, we'll all get financially rewarded. Not rich, but the dividend will protect us from higher prices on energy by getting everyone a monthly carbon-check from the Federal Government. For low- and middle-income people, this check will be more than the higher prices we have to pay because of the carbon fee. Because the dividend is the same for every family, high-income people—with

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Nebraskans for Peace's state office in Lincoln is located on land that formerly belonged to the Otoe Tribe.

Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

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Nebraskans for Peace Chapter & Affiliate Contact Information

Crete Chapter Pat Wikel..... 402-826-4818
Lincoln Chapter Paul Olson 402-475-1318
Omaha Chapter Mark Welsch 402-453-0776
Scottsbluff Chapter Byron Peterson 308-225-1589
Southwest
Nebraska Chapter Dennis Demmel 308-352-4078
Central Nebraska
Peace Workers Del Roper 308-384-3266

Contact the NFP State Office for information on the UNL, UNO, UNK, Creighton & Nebraska Wesleyan University and Hastings & Doane College Chapters

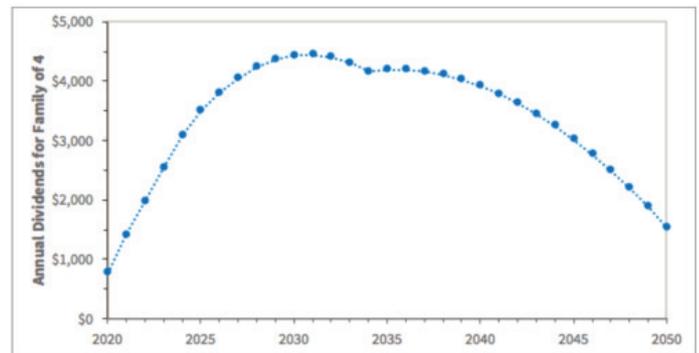
Carbon Fee & Dividend Bill, conclusion

their jet-setting, high-carbon footprints—will wind up paying more than they get back.

You may ask, why is Carbon Fee and Dividend the best answer to stop climate change from getting much worse? What else is Congress talking about? Some members are talking about adding new, complex regulations to companies that generate electricity. They will require them to lower their emissions, or buy 'carbon credits' from other companies that lower their emissions more quickly than the regulations require.

Here is why a Carbon Fee and Dividend bill is the best way to quickly lower carbon emissions.

Annual Dividends for a family of four



This chart shows the expected annual total of monthly carbon dividends for a family of four, based on the emissions targets stipulated in H.R.763.

1. CFD gives a monthly check to every family. It will increase over the years, while industries find ways to reduce their use of fossil fuels.
2. This check will protect people so they can pay for higher priced things while keeping their standard of living the same, or possibly increasing it for some families.
3. You would start to receive around \$60 and increase to \$400 per month! As prices start to drop after 2030, the check amounts would also slowly go down.
4. With a monthly dividend check helping everyone, Congress will not change the law in the future. If they did, and took billions of dollars away from families, they know they would be voted out of office.

Assessing the Environmental Risk of the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent

Nebraskans for Peace recently submitted the following statement to the Air Force Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Test Program: Environmental Assessment/Overseas Environmental Assessment in response to their request for public comment about the move to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

There's a grim irony in the timing of this "Environmental Assessment" for the "Ground Based Strategic Deterrent" that cuts to the core of the entire proposed nuclear arsenal 'modernization' program. At the very moment our planetary ecosystem is being uncontrollably assailed by a devastating global pandemic and an escalating climate crisis, the U.S. Government (to the tune of \$1 Trillion) is actively embarked on heightening the human-made peril of nuclear annihilation.

Given their respective biological and geophysical natures, the coronavirus and the climate crisis may never be fully subject to human management and control. The threat of nuclear holocaust, however, is a problem strictly of our own making. It's a peril we are inflicting on ourselves—and on the natural world that supports us. In terms of sheer harm to the environment, what more instantaneous cataclysm (short of an asteroid strike) can be imagined than that of nuclear war? Any purported 'environmental' assessment of the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent must, accordingly, take into account the program's intended purpose and projected effects.

While the very existence of nuclear weapons poses an existential threat to life on earth, land-based ICBMs constitute the most vulnerable leg of the U.S.'s deterrent triad. As fixed-point targets easily identifiable from Google Maps, ICBM silos are 'sitting ducks', lacking the de-

ception provided by mobile sea- and air-based systems. In the late 1970s and early '80s, the built-in vulnerability of land-based missile deployment was openly acknowledged. Sometime later, however, that vulnerability got inverted by nuclear planners into a hideous 'strategic advantage', who reasoned that enemies would need to 'waste' precious warheads from their limited WMD arsenals to destroy

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these solitary silos (deployed in remote, sparsely populated areas) before these weapons could be launched in retaliation. Essentially, in this contest of missile attrition, land-based ICBM targets would be intended to 'draw fire'—depleting the enemy's stockpile while enhancing the strategic dominance of the U.S.'s sea- and air-based legs.

Apart from treating the Nebraska Panhandle (and the rest of the Warren Air Force Base area) as militarily 'expendable', such a war-fighting strategy—should a nuclear conflict erupt—does incalculable damage environmentally. Our entire region of the country would become an uninhabitable wasteland. But the 'fallout' would reach far beyond the U.S. heartland. A nuclear exchange of even modest scale would endanger the se-

curity and resiliency of the global ecosystem. As University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers have shown ("Nuclear Weapons in a Changing Climate: Probability, Increasing Risks, and Perception", Adam Liska, et al., *Environment Magazine*, 2017, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=bseliska>), even a limited nuclear strike could precipitate a worldwide "nuclear autumn": throwing up such a cloud of dust, smoke and debris that the sun would be dimmed and global temperatures and precipitation levels would drop, leading to global crop failure and the collapse of our food system.

Instead of spending \$100-200 billion on an imprudent and precarious modernization of the land-based leg of the nuclear triad, endangering the planet's ecosystem (and our global food production and distribution system), and compromising our national security (by flouting the United Nations just-enacted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons), the U.S. should be earnestly pursuing negotiations with the other nuclear states to abolish these Weapons of Mass Destruction. In the interest of national, economic and environmental security, the Department of Defense should decommission—rather than 'modernize'—the land-based ICBM leg of the nuclear triad.

Nebraska is already a nuclear 'bullseye' as the headquarters of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue. Continuing to weaponize the state's Panhandle only further imperils the people and environment of Nebraska...

And, as we're now learning, the very Earth itself.

Rather than being the capstone of humanity’s million-year-long progressive evolution and our most decisive step toward a better life, the adoption of agriculture was in many ways a catastrophe from which we have never recovered.

have benefited least from their use. It’s estimated that the 400-year slave trade led to 15-20 million deaths. The World Health Organization anticipates that climate change will lead to 9 million excess deaths in the next 20 years alone with the lion’s share being in Africa and Asia.

Fossil fuels have allowed for the production of food on a global scale never seen before. This caloric abundance paved the way for a human population explosion.

While human population growth remained stable over the first 10,000 years of human civilization, it began rising in the 1700s, accelerating to nearly exponential growth in the 1900s up through to the present day.

Starting in the 1900s, society expanded total and per capita food production globally, keeping pace with demand. As population grew, so did the crops and vice versa. This, and corresponding reductions in hunger, micronutrient deficiencies, childhood mortality and increases in life expectancies globally, has been viewed as one of the greatest public health achievements in human history.

However, all of this has come at significant cost to the health of the planet. The impacts of people on our planet’s natural systems cannot be underestimated. In addition to fossil fuel use, in order to feed ourselves, we have converted 40 percent of the Earth’s land surface to agriculture. To keep our crops irrigated we use nearly half the accessible freshwater on the planet. Approximately 90 percent of the world’s fisheries are in permanent decline from overfishing and exploitation. More than 60 percent of the Earth’s rivers have been dammed and roughly half of the world’s forests have been cut down, and we are crowding out most of the other remaining life on our planet. According to a comprehensive 2019 report from the “Global Assessment of the

Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”, approximately one million species are facing extinction over the coming decades. And this is not just what is to come. It is happening now. Since 1970, human activity has reduced the numbers of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish with whom we share the planet by over 50 percent.

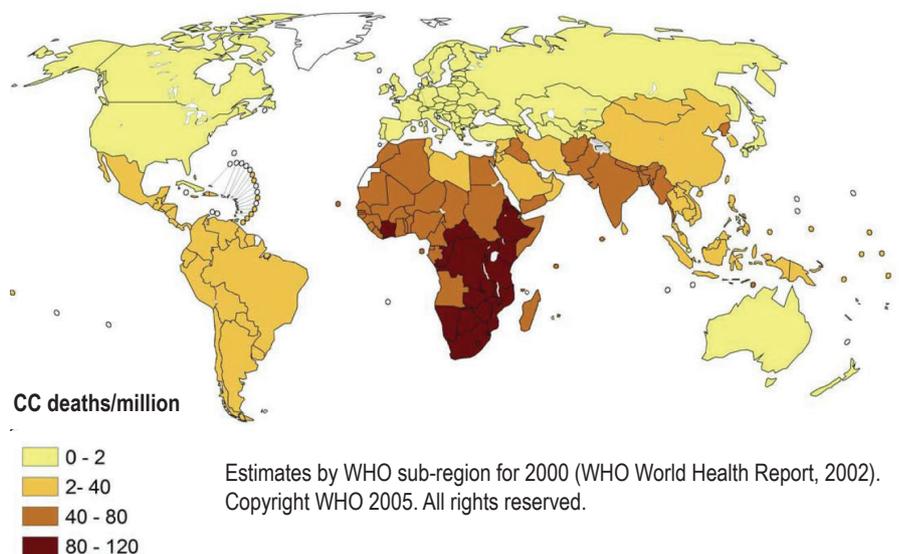
Earth can no longer absorb our wastes and we are using resources faster than they can be replenished. This is driving biophysical change at levels never before seen in human history. These biophysical changes have caused us to leave the safe operating space for at least 5 of the 9 planetary boundaries as defined by Johan Rockström from the Stockholm Resilience Centre and Will Steffen from the Australian National University. The exceeded boundaries include climate change, biodiversity, land use changes, and nitrogen and phosphorus flows. It is likely that we have also exceeded the safe operating space for novel entities, in-

cluding things like endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other novel chemicals that humans have produced and let loose into the biosphere, although a specific boundary has yet to be defined. Each of these boundaries interacts with the others in complex and often unexpected ways. The interactions alter the quality of the air we breathe, the quality and amount of water we drink, and the quality and amount of food we can produce. These, in turn, impact human health to a dramatic degree. Additionally, human-induced climate change is also increasing our exposure to emerging infectious diseases and weather hazards such as heat waves, droughts, floods, wildfires and tropical storms.

Despite paying these costs to feed humanity, the human population is largely malnourished. Nearly a billion people are undernourished, going hungry—while on the opposite end of the spectrum, we have the overfed with unhealthy diets leading to malnourishment and a growing

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Deaths by Climate Change



pandemic of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and cancer. The connection between obesity, under-nutrition, and climate change has been coined the “Global Syndemic” by *The Lancet*, one of the top two-rated medical journals in the world. In the U.S., 70 percent of adults are overweight or obese and 60 percent of those are malnourished.

Our quest to feed humanity has us on a current trajectory that will lead us to running out of land, water, and most of the species that make up the biological diversity that provide necessary ecosystem services for food production like pol-

lution and pest management. Shifting this trajectory is truly daunting and will require changes in policy and practice across at least four dimensions:

- 1) Stemming Population Growth
- 2) Changes in the Wasting of Food
- 3) Changes in Food Consumption
- 4) Changes in Food Production

Stemming Population Growth

Providing opportunities to educate and improve the health and lives of women and children, and expanding access to family planning for those who desire it, could reduce the number of births per year by approximately 40 million—around half the annual total globally, either through prevention or delay. By providing the opportunity for women and families to have fewer but healthier children, food demand as well as the pres-

Changes in the Wasting of Food

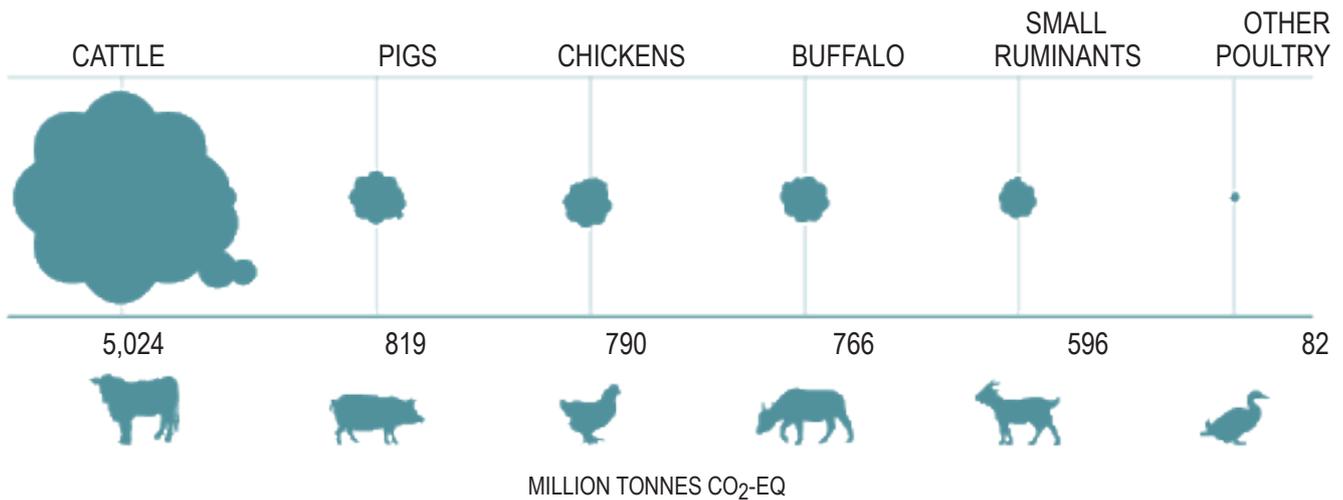
Approximately one-third of the food produced every year is lost or wasted. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, if food waste were a country, it would have the third-highest greenhouse gas emissions in the world after China and the U.S. This means that all the water, land and agrochemicals used to produce that wasted food are also wasted.

The causes vary between lower- and higher-income countries, with losses oc-

curring at the post-harvest and processing levels in low-income countries and losses at the retail and consumer levels in wealthier countries. In developed nations, to reduce these losses, campaigns by grocers are being undertaken to reduce the amount of food that is thrown out because it is ‘past its date’. An app called “Too Good To Go” notifies consumers when grocers heavily discount food before throwing it away. This allows consumers the opportunity to purchase healthy food at a fraction of the price while simultaneously providing grocers with income on products that would have otherwise been a total loss. To reduce waste in lower-income countries, improvements are needed in food storage and supply chains. In addition to less waste and a lower environmental footprint, these changes will provide retailers with more food to sell.

Changes in Food Consumption Patterns

Higher supply translates to lower costs to the consumer and more nutritious food in the mouths of more people. Among the scientific community, there is strong consensus that we need to change what we eat in order to address our environmental issues. The production of meat—particularly beef, lamb and pork—has a significantly larger environmental footprint than any other food system component. This is because livestock require large amounts of land



to grow their feed and they are inefficient at converting the calories they eat into calories for human consumption. For every six calories that a cow consumes, only one calorie is available for human consumption. Lastly, ruminants produce enormous amounts of greenhouse gases, particularly methane.

The “EAT Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems” published a report in 2019 titled “Food in the Anthropocene”. According to the authors, a dietary shift away from meat, beef in particular, and toward a plant-based diet would dramatically reduce the ecological and environmental footprint of our food system.

Our current industrial system of producing meat is problematic for multiple reasons. Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) congregate

Lincoln NFP Chapter Continues 'Truth and Reconciliation' Work

by Kathleen Rutledge, Bill Arfmann and Paul Olson

The Nelson Mandela birthday picnics that brought the African-American and other communities together in Lincoln for some years are not dead but resurrected in a new form. During 2020, we were not able to continue our Mandela-inspired, in-person 'Truth and Reconciliation' work in Lincoln, given the pandemic. That does not mean, however, that we ceased and gave up.

We have been working on two main educational goals: (1) generating a history of race and racism in Nebraska history and (2) encouraging a sense of urgency in Lincoln Public Schools to act to improve the experiences of students of color in the district. The Truth and Reconciliation work is a joint project of the Lincoln Chapter of Nebraskans for Peace and the Lincoln Branch of the NAACP. Co-chairs are Dr. Dewayne Mays, president of NAACP Lincoln; Dr. Paul Olson, UNL English professor emeritus; and William Arfmann, retired community and union organizer.

In the Truth and Reconciliation process, first comes Truth. For the history initiative, we wish first to create a bibliography of primary and secondary sources to be the foundation for a truthful history of Nebraska that brings light to the pain and conflict that five broad groups of people have experienced here: Latinos/Latinas, Indigenous people, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and recent refugee groups.

A steering committee of educators and writers is guiding the history project. They are: Dr. Marty Ramirez, retired counseling psychologist, UNL; Kevin Abourezk, Lakota Tribe member and managing editor of *Indianz.com* and vice chair of the Lincoln Indian

Center; Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones, associate professor of History and Ethnic Studies, UNL; Dr. Gregory E. Rutledge, associate professor of English and Ethnic Studies, UNL; and Takako Olson, Lincoln Public Schools director of curriculum and instruction. We are very lucky to have as the coordinator of the project Kathleen Rutledge, retired editor, *Lincoln Journal Star*. Additional LPS resource people are Dr. Rob McIntarffer, assessment evaluation specialist and Jaci Kellison, K-12 social studies curriculum specialist.

In the Truth and Reconciliation process, first comes Truth.

The committee is very pleased that Veronica Duran, a bilingual Ph.D. candidate in history at UNL, has agreed to assemble the bibliography by May 2021. She will consult with Dr. Jones and Ms. Rutledge as she does her work.

Beginning in June 2021, we intend to engage a researcher or researchers to write a text that would form the basis for a digital resource that could be used by educators, community groups, pastors and others committed to helping Nebraskans become more aware of this history. The working title of the piece is "Race, Racism and White Supremacy in Nebraska History". Although much of this history may center on Lincoln, Omaha and eastern Nebraska in general, we realize the stories of these groups span the state.

This history would open with a section that gives an account of the people who were here on this land before dispossession and those who

were removed from elsewhere to here, then pick up with the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. As Dr. Jones commented, "I want people to understand why this is such a conflicted space." We hope, too, to show what effects racism has had on the social structure in Lincoln and beyond; in other words, "Why are we the way we are?" as Dr. Mays put it. Although successes and achievements are not the primary focus of this history, these will be part of putting into context the pains and struggles of these groups of people and how they prevailed in many ways.

The steering committee is also generating names of people steeped in knowledge of these ethnic groups who can be consultants. "We're not the experts," Dr. Jones has observed.

We wish to thank the generous members of NFP who contributed personal checks to this project. Together with the Lincoln Branch of the NAACP, we have raised more than \$14,000. This money made possible our retaining the work of Ms. Duran.

For the second part of the Truth and Reconciliation Process—urging LPS to act with urgency to improve the experiences of students of color—we are guided by a group of faith leaders and others in the community. One immediate goal is to bring about a community meeting with school board members and administrators to discuss recruitment and retention of educators of color, richer curricula, equity plans at each school and interventions to address the needs of Native students. A statistic that drives this: A third of LPS are students of color but only 6.5 percent of LPS teachers and administrators are people of color.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Where Was Our Warming? It Was AWOL in the Arctic

Snow coverage in the Arctic continues to shrink, as you can see from the accompanying map, But not here, not last winter. Here, in Nebraska, in February, it was as cold as a _____. Fill in your own expletive.

Our record cold and heavy snow in February does not mean that the whole Earth is cooling. It does mean that the upper air currents are twisting and turning in weird ways.

the last couple of million years. So what is going on? Climate involves changes over time. Weather is today's wind in our faces. Weather is the story; climate is the plot.

The coldest day I can recall in Omaha before February 16, 2021 was in December of 1983. It was a memorable day mainly for a low of about minus 22 F. That was temperature, not wind chill. I was walking along Dodge Street from

The Same Lows in Fairbanks and Austin

One day apart on February 16-17, 2021, the forecast temperature bottomed at plus 7 F. in Fairbanks, Alaska (the average there is minus 13 F.). In Austin, the forecast low one day later was plus 7 (the average there in February is 45 F.). The fact that a coincidental low of 7 degrees F. was reached two days apart in Fairbanks and Austin is an atmospheric



Our record cold and heavy snow in February does not mean that the whole Earth is cooling... The carbon dioxide level is still with us, at about 417 parts per million in 2021. It's still holding more heat than it has in the last couple of million years. So what is going on? Climate involves change over time. Weather is today's wind in our faces.

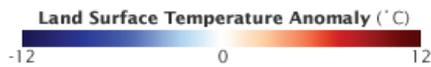
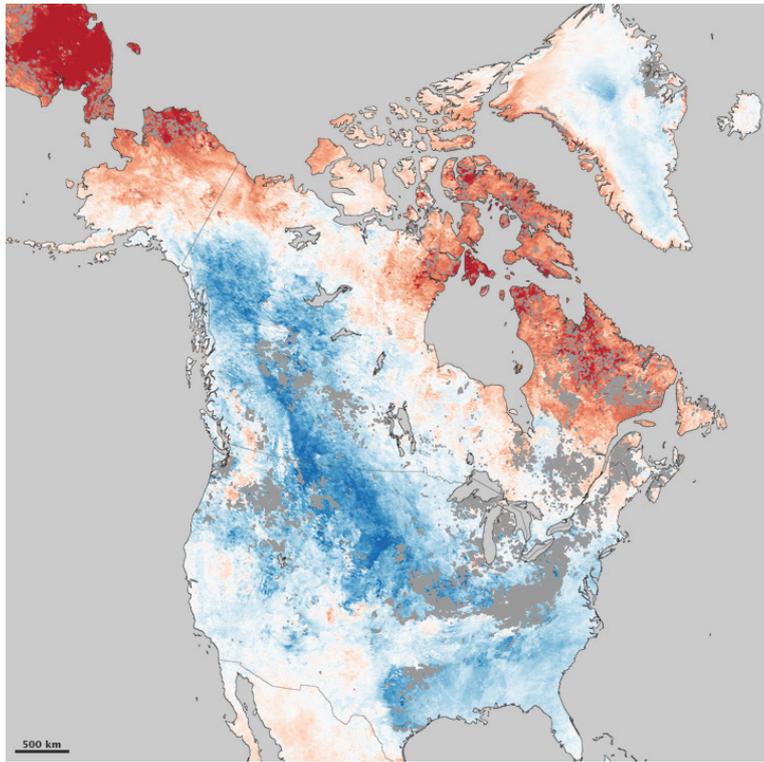
Remember February 16? It was what? Minus 23? Record cold, of course. Was it a day when perhaps you wanted to ask Dr. What's HOT in Global Warming? "Where is our global warming when we really need it?" Well, here I am, with a quick lesson in the geophysical facts, a.k.a. "The Climate Plays Tricks on Us".

The carbon dioxide level is still with us, at about 417 parts per million in 2021. It's still holding more heat than it has in

Dundee, at about 52rd Street, westward during my second Omaha winter, to UNO, where I was beginning a 37-year career as an assistant professor of journalism when a man I had never previously met stopped his car in the midst of the busy street, leaned over, shoved the front door open, and commanded "GET IN!" "YES SIR," I replied, escaping the coldest day of my life, until then.

prank played on us by the Arctic Oscillation (map #2), in which the jet stream (which steers storms and upper-air wind patterns at a height of jet aircraft) flows north to Alaska, then back southward and eastward, plunging to the Gulf of Mexico, then north and slightly east up the U.S. East Coast, sucking relatively warm air, loaded with moisture, out of the Gulf Stream.

That air circulates counter-clockwise around the storm, colliding with cold air over the land, causing the storm to inten-



sify, wringing out prodigious amounts of snow over the United States’ northeast and Middle Atlantic states. The western side of the storm whips cold air into Texas and nearby states (also into the southern United States), often causing deadly ice storms. This is also a recipe for low temperatures such as 7 F. above zero in places such as Austin, Texas—roughly equal to much of Alaska at the same time, which is above average there.

Arctic Ice Cover is Still Shrinking

This pattern (and others, such as the “ice-albedo feedback”), considered as a whole, may affect the entire Northern Hemisphere. Again, thanks to *NASA’s Earth Observatory*, witness: “Throughout 2020, the Arctic Ocean and surrounding seas endured several notable weather and climate events. In spring, a persistent heat wave over Siberia provoked the rapid melting of sea ice in the East Siberian and Laptev Seas. By the end of summer, Arctic Ocean ice cover melted back to the second-lowest minimum on record. In autumn, the annual freeze-up of sea ice got off to a late and sluggish start.

“Forty years of satellite data show that 2020 was just the latest in a decades-long decline of Arctic sea ice. In a review of scientific literature, polar

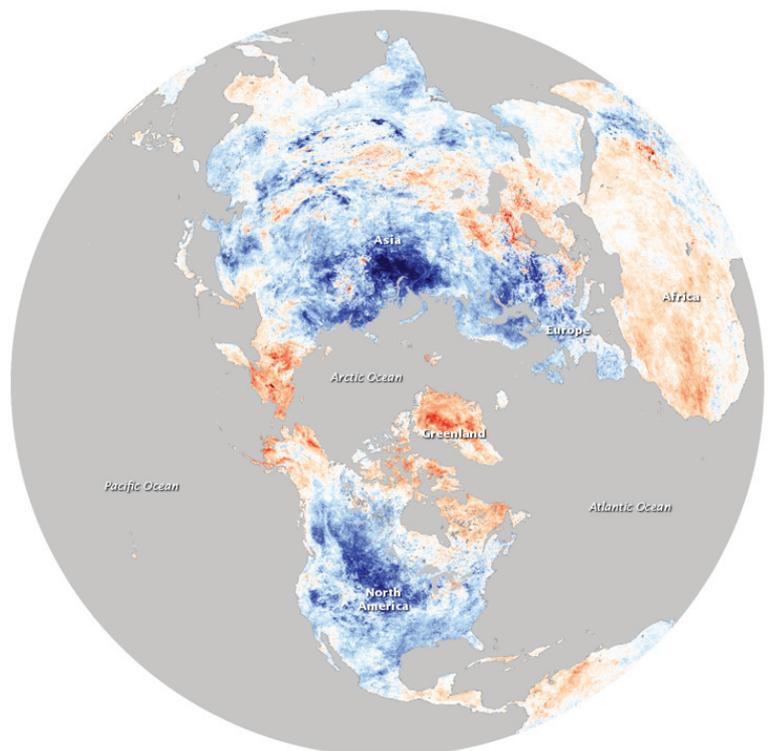
scientists Julienne Stroeve and Dirk Notz outlined some of these changes: In addition to shrinking ice cover, melting seasons are getting longer and sea ice is losing its longevity.

“The longer melting seasons are the result of increasingly earlier starts to spring melting and ever-later starts to freeze-up in autumn... Averaged across the entire Arctic Ocean, freeze-up is happening about a week later per decade. That equates to nearly one month later since the start of the satellite record in 1979.

“The change is part of a cycle called the ‘ice-albedo feedback’. Open ocean water absorbs 90 percent of the Sun’s energy that falls on it; bright sea ice reflects 80 percent of it. With greater areas of the Arctic Ocean exposed to solar energy early in the season, more heat can be absorbed—a pattern that reinforces melting.”

And, as a result, “The Arctic sea ice pack is becoming more fragile. In summer 2020, ships easily navigated the Northern Sea Route in ice-free waters, and even made it to the North Pole without much resistance.”

Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor at the University of Nebraska–Omaha, is author of Climate Change: An Encyclopedia of Science, Society, and Solutions (2017).



LAND BACK

A Movement, A Spirit, A Practice

By Erin Poor | Citizen of Cherokee Nation; temporary visitor on Pawnee and UMÓ'HOⁿ and Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Land.

In recent years the phrase LAND BACK has gained popularity in mainstream culture thanks to the work of Indigenous activists. But it is so much more than a contemporary movement. It is a spirit that has endured and strengthened over generations, informed by the multiplicity of Indigenous resistance practices across the globe. It is a movement,

Land was, is, and forever will be stewarded by Indigenous peoples. And it is these relationships of stewardship, beneficence, reciprocity, exchange, respect, and reverence that undergirded centuries of Indigenous knowledge of the land. Under Indigenous stewardship the land flourished. Animals and ecosystems were celebrated for their biodiversity. Balance was, is, and will be forever a core value. Since the dominant practice has become land ownership and resource

ancestral knowledges of land stewardship, assert self-sovereignty, and achieve collective liberation.

How does LAND BACK happen? In many ways. For one, Indigenous people are using legal means to pursue their right to lands granted by the United States through treaties. For example, "NDN Collective", a nonprofit led by Lakota community leaders has recently reignited the fight for recognition of Lakota land rights and Tribal sovereignty in the Black Hills. Promised to the Lakota (federally recognized as the "Sioux Nation") in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the U.S. broke their treaty when gold was found in the Black Hills. That region, known to the Lakota as the Hesápa, is their sacred homelands. Though the Lakota never ceded that land, the United States claims ownership and American citizens occupy the land. Lakota leaders have engaged in several direct actions to claim their legal right to that land, some of which have ended with violence by law enforcement and arrests of Lakota people on their own land.

LAND BACK strategy also includes engaging with individual landowners and encouraging them to deed their land to the Native Nation of that region, or to individual Native Americans and their families. Families who benefited from policies like the Homestead Act of 1862, directly benefited from state-sanctioned genocide and forced removal of the Indigenous inhabitants of that land. Today, white people in America benefit from generational wealth and property that is only possible because of Indigenous genocide, removal and allotment policies of

conclusion on page 14

To better understand the LAND BACK issue, it is important to first call out different ideologies of human-land relations. In the current Western society, land ownership and ownership of private property is a key component to life, policy, and economic prosperity...

but it does not answer to one leader. It is the coalescing of generational efforts, executed using a diversity of tactics, with one goal: getting the land back.

To better understand the issue, it is important to first call out different ideologies of human-land relations. In the current Western society, as has been the case since the beginning of the United States, land ownership and ownership of private property is a key component to life, policy, and economic prosperity. To Indigenous peoples, the concept of land ownership did not exist before the United States. Rather, Indigenous peoples believed in land stewardship. This form of relationship indicates kinship between land, human, and other-than-human inhabitants. Many Indigenous peoples consider the land to be a part of Mother Earth, and one cannot own their Mother. Instead, Tribal peoples worked with the land in a collective way, with no one person having more of a right to the land than another.

extraction, this world has seen genocide and forced removals of people, the destruction of habitat and biodiversity, climate change, and what some scientists have termed the sixth mass extinction.

Though Indigenous people believe in land stewardship over ownership, we are forced to negotiate our rights and existence in terms more familiar to settler colonialism, i.e. ownership. LAND BACK as a movement seeks to transfer the ownership of land from non-Native to Native hands so that Indigenous people can resume their ancestral land-based practices and ceremonies, apply their

To Indigenous peoples, the concept of land ownership did not exist before the United States. They believed in land stewardship. The land is part of Mother Earth, and one cannot own their Mother.

The Future of Food, continued

animals in conditions that many consider inhumane. In order to prevent disease in their squalid conditions and from their unnatural diets, and to promote growth and weight gain, antibiotics are fed to these animals. This has led to a global pandemic of antibiotic resistance, possibly moving us into a ‘post-antibiotic era’ where routine infections may once again kill. This is on top of the significant water, soil and air pollution that CAFOs cause.

It cannot go without saying that while the current pandemic virus was not born in a CAFO but rather a ‘wet market’, it’s well documented that confined poultry operations, especially, are a breeding ground of novel flu viruses. The “Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production”, a comprehensive, independent assessment of the meat industry between 2005 and 2008, reported that these operations represent an unacceptable level of threat to public health. It’s not a matter of if, but when, we will experience another pandemic and the next one will likely be a swine or avian flu and probably one that is more deadly than the current coronavirus. The crowding of swine and poultry in CAFOs increases both transmission and the likelihood of mutation that can make it not only transmissible to humans but pathogenic.

It’s also important to note that chronic disease has also played a role in the deadliness of our current pandemic, as 94 percent of those persons who have died from COVID-19 had some underlying health condition.

If we were to adopt the dietary shifts recommended by the EAT Lancet Commission, we would also realize substantial reductions in noncommunicable diseases including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers. The commission reported that adoption of their “planetary health diet” would prevent around 20 percent or 11 million deaths annually.

For wealthier populations, it is a clear win-win for both human and planetary health with reduced meat consump-

tion. In poorer populations, with less diverse diets and already very low meat consumption, increasing dietary diversity and nutrient-rich foods is critical and animal source foods can represent an important source of nutrients. However, it should be a public health priority for both populations to reduce the consumption of highly processed foods with added sugars, salt and fats.

Changing dietary patterns is complex. People’s identities are often linked to what they eat as it is often part of a family or cultural heritage. Likewise, group or tribal identities surrounding beliefs about animal welfare, health, environmental issues, etc. factor into decisions about food choice. However, there is a growing awareness of both the environmental and health issues associ-

ated with meat.

FMI is a Food Industry Association that in 2019 conducted a “U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends” report. They found that 33 percent of households now have at least one member that follows a vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian or flexitarian diet which is defined as eating mostly a vegetarian diet, but occasionally eating meat and poultry. This has created a boon for companies making plant-based meat alternatives. “The Power of Meat 2019” report, also from FMI, revealed that consumers are purchasing \$878 million worth of these products annually with sales increasing by 19.2 percent in 2019.

However, consumers alone will not be enough to make the kinds of changes

continued on page 12

Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

In planning for the future of Nebraskans for Peace, I would like to focus on Planned Giving to Nebraska Peace Foundation.

While any gift to the Foundation involves some amount of planning, a Planned Gift is one where consideration is given in choosing the appropriate vehicle, often via your estate, to match the mission of Nebraskans for Peace with the donor’s intent. So if you are ardent to see that Nebraskans for Peace continues long into the future, then please consider a Planned Gift to Nebraska Peace Foundation which provides financial support for Nebraskans for Peace long into the future.

The vehicle may be a Charitable Remainder Trust or various other types of trusts which benefit Nebraska Peace Foundation upon the donor’s death. Check with your accountant or tax advisor to see which type of vehicle, a trust or a direct bequest, best suits your situation and your desires.



The Future of Food, conclusion

needed. Governments will have to step in and subsidize foods that promote human and planetary health rather than continue to subsidize animal and processed foods that contribute to the degradation of human and planetary health. This will have to mean the end of the powerful lobbies for the beef, dairy, sugar and ultra-processed food and beverage industries whose entire goal is to influence and curtail national dietary guidelines that are supposed to be crafted for the improvement of nutrition, health and environmental sustainability.

Changes in Food Production

Because agriculture is responsible for such a significant proportion of pollution and climate change-inducing green-

The “EAT Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems”, published a report in 2019 titled “Food in the Anthropocene”...

house gas emissions, there is also strong consensus in that we have an ecological and ethical obligation to reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture.

Where we have not reached a consensus is how to feed a growing population while decoupling environmental degradation from food production. We cannot afford to grow more food through ‘intensification’ (converting additional forest or other land to agricultural lands). The alternative is to increase yields on the lands already being used, or ‘intensification’. Current intensification relies on the use of petrochemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides and GMOs, which is recognized as also

unsustainable.

The current push is to shift to, what is considered to be, sustainable intensification through the use of precision agriculture where all the same inputs are used but used to a lesser degree. Precision agriculture utilizes technologies such as geographic information systems (GIS), automated machine guidance, infield and remote sensing, mobile computing, and global positioning systems (GPS) to identify where and when individual plants need various inputs such as fertilizer, water and pesticides. Critics of precision agriculture point out that the expense, the reliance on machines and the lack of farmer education in these modalities will only disenfranchise farmers further and put more control and money in the hands and pockets of agribusiness and corporate entities.

Rather, I believe, the solutions lie in ‘agroecological’ approaches that more closely mimic natural ecosystems as a way to feed ourselves while simultaneously addressing our environmental issues.

Organic Agriculture

At the Rodale Institute, research has been done to show that through ‘regenerative’ organic agriculture more than 40 percent of current annual CO2 emissions could be sequestered—and, if at the same time, all global pasture was managed utilizing a regenerative model with more effective manure management, an additional 71 percent could be sequestered. This would put us over the 100 percent mark and contribute to a drawing down of excess greenhouse gases, helping to reverse the greenhouse effect.

Perennial Polycultures

Likewise, the Land Institute in Salina Kansas is working on developing perennial grains, oil seeds and legumes that can be planted in a polyculture. This work is critical in that the potential for carbon sequestration, prevention of soil

erosion, and soil building is enormous. And they are having much success with their perennial wheatgrass, “Kernza”.

“Permaculture” is a term used to describe an intentional system of agriculture that reflects the interrelationships and sustainability of natural ecosystems. It has been described as a way to create a ‘permanent culture’ surrounding food systems, but also around shelter, energy and technology. Permaculture is an attempt to optimally utilize land and resources in a circular way so that all wastes or outputs are used as inputs—eliminating waste and creating a truly sustainable system that can be utilized generations into the future for subsistence. Several disciplines are implemented in the practice of permaculture including organic farming, agroforestry, integrated farming, sustainable development, and applied ecology.

...According to the authors, a dietary shift away from meat, beef in particular, and toward a plant-based diet would dramatically reduce the ecological and environmental footprint of our food system.

According to the Nebraska-based environmental consulting firm “GC Resolve”, “Regenerative farming and ranching practices include minimizing tillage, multi-species cover cropping, multiple crop rotations, implementation of livestock back onto the soil accompanied by holistic grazing practices, agro-forestry with tree intercropping, silvopasture on grazing lands, and degraded rangeland restoration.” Nebraska happens to be a hub of Regenerative Agriculture and these practices have the potential to build

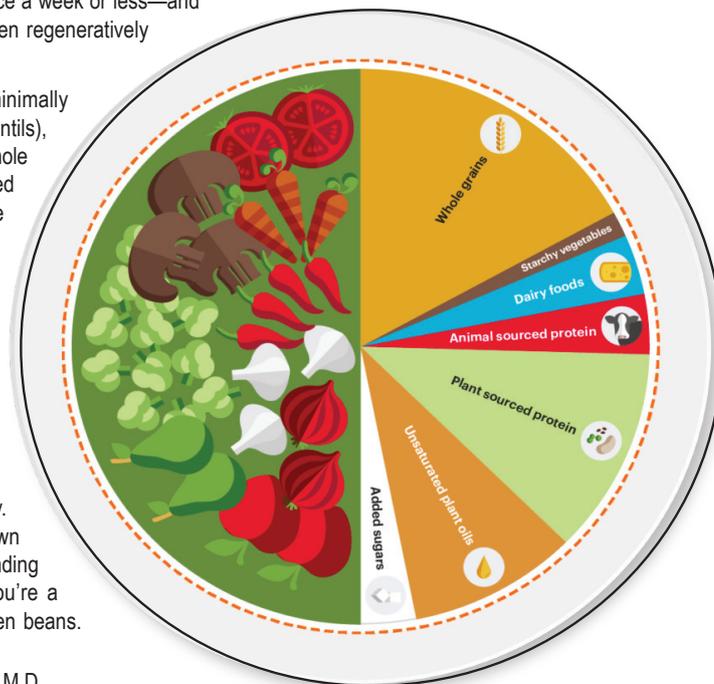
So what's a climate friendly diet in Nebraska look like?

In order to achieve a diet that is best suited to both human and planetary health, consider reducing the frequency and amount of meat consumption. The mantra of “Less meat, Better meat” is advisable. If you cannot eliminate meat entirely, try to consume no more than 3 ounces of red meat (roughly the equivalent of 1 hamburger) once a week or less, and limit poultry to twice a week or less—and consider the source. Try to only consume meat that has been regeneratively and humanely raised.

To replace the meat in your diet, add more whole, minimally processed plant foods: legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils), potatoes (both sweet and white), and whole grains (including whole grain flours and meals). Find dietary staples that can be sourced locally from growers practicing sustainable or regenerative agriculture or permaculture. Farmers Markets and outlets like Open Harvest and Lone Tree Foods in Lincoln, Grain Place Foods in Marquette, Nebraska and the Nebraska Food Co-op make it easier to source locally grown food.

And lastly, grow and preserve some of your own perishable vegetables and fruits. Start with a goal of growing 3 percent of the calories you and your family consume. That may not sound like much, given that each of us eats over 2,000 calories daily, but when you tally up all the calories an entire family consumes, it adds up quickly. (Check out *The Grow Network* or the DVD, “Grow Your Own Groceries” by Marjorie Wildcraft to learn more.) Consider finding a growing partner and sharing your harvests. Perhaps you're a master tomato grower while your friend grows amazing green beans. Swap jars of preserved produce.

— Dr. Amanda McKinney, M.D.



soil, restore soil health and sequester carbon.

Urban Agriculture

Today, cities consume more than two-thirds of the world's energy and account for more than 70 percent of global CO2 emissions. As a result, they can play a leading role in global decarbonization. By growing more food on-site in cities, carbon emissions are reduced through reduced ‘food miles’—shipping food across the country and the globe—and reuse of urban organic waste. Urban farming also improves local food security and nutrition while simultaneously improving the urban climate.

There seems to be a general sense that urban agriculture can benefit the environment, in terms of waste reduction, biodiversity, etc.; however, there has been limited research to directly substantiate this claim. What research does exist seems to indicate that the environmental

benefits of urban agriculture outweigh the costs. Benefits include:

- Use of private yards, vacant lots, rooftops and even balconies and window sills to grow some of our own food, which will increase not only our local food security, but our awareness and appreciation of the precarious nature of food production and its central role in our lives.
- Reducing stormwater runoff through rainwater capture and vegetative stormwater absorption, improving the quality of local surface and groundwater sources while minimizing the use of drinking water for irrigation.
- Reducing the Urban Heat Island Effect and improving air quality.
- Increased biodiversity by bringing plants, insects and small animals back

into the cities.

- Local food production which reduces emissions from food transport (food miles) and reduces food waste while improving access to healthy food.

An argument about which of these methods is a more relevant solution is moot. We will need all of these solutions going forward.

I typically end my presentations with anthropologist Margaret Mead's famous quote: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” I concur, but I will offer a clarification here in that I think that in order for us to get out of this mess we've gotten ourselves into, we will need quite a large group of thoughtful, committed citizens. Either way, I will be one of them and I hope you will join me.

LAND BACK, conclusion

the 18th and 19th century. Landowners, who care to address the humanitarian atrocities of the not-so-distant past, have slowly begun deeding their land to the Native Nations who preceded them in that region.

Nebraska has seen a few examples of this kind of solidarity with Indigenous peoples. In 2007, Roger and Linda Welsch deeded 60 acres of farmland in central Nebraska to the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma (The Pawnee Nation's homelands are in central Nebraska; they were forcibly removed to Oklahoma in the 19th century). The Welschs will live out

exercise self-sovereignty, and to heal the land. Even breaking off an acreage from a larger landholding to give to a Native family would have the power to change the lives of generations.

Other examples of LAND BACK have been seen on city and state levels. In 2019, the city of Eureka, California formally signed the transfer of lands on Duluwat Island back to the Wiyot Tribe. The island is sacred to the Wiyot people, and it had been stolen from the tribe 160 years ago after the people living on the island were massacred so the land could

of this ongoing effort. You can donate funds to Indigenous peoples or Nations seeking to purchase land. You can deed your land to an Indigenous person or Nation, to use immediately or after your death. If you are a lawyer, you could help with the legal components of deeding land to Native peoples or Nations. If you are in business, you could educate your fellow community members about LAND BACK and the importance of Indigenous land stewardship. If you live in a city or town, you could advocate to your city leaders to deed back city lands to Native Nations or peoples.

It can become a practice that you include in your weekly routine, or in your daily life.

A good place to begin is by understanding on whose homelands you currently reside. A website called [Whose.land](#) is a great resource. There is also an app called [Native Land](#) you can download to your smartphone. Once you understand whose land you are on, begin to find a way to be in right relation with that Nation and its people. It is your responsibility to learn the stories of removal, so you can understand the depth of historical trauma that lives on in Indigenous peoples and begin to make it right. LAND BACK is a movement, a spirit, and a practice that each of us can live



their lives on their land, and when they die, the Pawnee Nation will be the legal owners of the land. More recently, in 2018, Nebraska landowners Helen and Art Tanderup deeded 1.6 acres of their land near Neligh, Nebraska to the Ponca Tribe. The Ponca Tribe has been able to cultivate their sacred corn on that land after it had been absent for more than 130 years.

Landowners can also choose to give land back to individual Indigenous people and families. To be Indigenous is to be of the land. Indigenous peoples need access to land for ceremony, to resurrect ancestral foodways, to rebuild kinship networks, to

be used for a dairy farm. After decades of advocacy, the Wiyot people were successful in convincing the city to give them the land back.

Nonprofits and conservation organizations have also played a role in the LAND BACK movement. Within the last two years, the Nature Conservancy in Nebraska has given 284 acres of land to the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska. The Iowa Tribe will establish a Tribal National Park, only the second of such parks to exist.

LAND BACK is not only the work of Indigenous activists, it is a movement that every single person can and should be a part of. By giving what you have, you can help be a part

daily. And if we live that, we can achieve the rematriation of land, the return to Indigenous land stewardship, and a healthier Earth for our future generations.

This article was informed by several Indigenous people fighting for their land and who embody the spirit of LAND BACK, including Felecia Welke, Corinne Rice Grey Cloud, Kanahus Manuel, Gord Hill, Enāēmaehkiw Kesqnaeh, and , NDN Collective. Wado.

Erin Poor, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, is an independent art historian, curator, organizer, grant writer, and public educator based in Lincoln, NE. Erin is a clinical mental health counselor in training, hoping to be of service to her communities.

HARD TRUTH, conclusion

ing very high levels of contamination.” Hubbard, retired doctor of environment and health, is gravely concerned about neonicotinoids, “the most prominent pesticide found at the site, [which] are known to affect the neurologic system of bees, neurologic and reproductive systems in deer and probably developmental abnormalities in infants. Pipes broke in February, releasing millions of gallons of manure- and pesticide-laden water into the adjacent stream.”

The Guardian reported, “Some of the levels recorded are just off the charts,” said Dan Raichel, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which has been working with academics and other environmental protection groups to monitor the situation in Mead.

Clearly there is plenty of blame to go around, all the way back to Reagan and the delusion that deregulation creates prosperity. Failure to study, foresee, legislate and prepare to act on clear and present dangers magnified by climate change may fairly be charged against federal and state governments alike. Today’s EPA considers such matters best left to the states. Currently “the label is law.” Seed producers, wholesalers, retailers and growers alike are charged with making sure the end disposers of unsold/unused seed have the correct certificates. Say what?

Some of the blame here must go to District 44 Sen. Dan Hughes, former chair of the Legislature’s Natural Resources Committee, who agreed to schedule LR. 4 first brought by District 3 Sen. Carol Blood in 2016, but he reneged. Sen. Blood first proposed a statewide water quality study over concern for cancer patients who lived along the state’s waterways. Had the Unicameral had a chance to see the results of such a study earlier, law may well have been in place to prevent this disaster at Mead.

However, the new Natural Resources chair is Sen. Bruce Bostelman of District 23—which includes Mead. To say the least, Sen. Bostelman does not often prioritize environmental protection. But he may be moved by his constituents to conclude a statewide water study is critical now, beginning perhaps with the waters, above ground and below, impacted by AltEn’s criminal scam. He may schedule such a resolution so it can be debated and voted upon.

Sen. Bostelman can benefit one of the state’s great economic drivers, even through the pandemic—the ethanol industry which doesn’t deserve the black eye. **Mead is an outlier, not the norm.** Nebraska is the #2 ethanol producing state in the U.S. Increasing replacement of liquid fossil fuels with biofuels is critical. Princeton’s Carbon Mitigation Initiative promotes turnkey practices available NOW and recommends increasing ethanol use by a factor of ten, or even one hundred! Right now Nebraska produces plenty of ethanol to meet state needs and export more. But obsolete pump infrastructure is a major barrier against our state’s market for E-30.

Some friends disagree, but I applaud the wisdom of our state’s Environmental Trust reaching out to rural Nebraska, funding upgraded pumps to dispense 30% ethanol blend, preventing carbon uptake into the atmosphere and growing the rural economy.

As I go to press, NDEE has filed suit against AtlEn. By contrast the governor of Texas blamed renewables for the collapse of that state’s energy grid. Not unlike the Mead disaster, the greatest part of blame in Texas is down to lax law, lax enforcement and deregulation.

Nebraska’s governor understands this matter is serious. He may be late to the party, but a dear friend pointed out it’s neither helpful nor sporting to beat on a guy who just woke up.

Political Contacts

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comment Line: 202-456-1111
202-456-1414; Fax 202-456-2993
www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Sen. Deb Fischer

454 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-1325 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
www.fischer.senate.gov

Sen. Ben Sasse

107 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
www.sasse.senate.gov

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, Dist. 1

1517 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-4806
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)
<http://fortenberry.house.gov>

Rep. Don Bacon

1024 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4155
<https://bacon.house.gov/>
Rep. Adrian Smith, District 3
502 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6435
Fax: (202) 225-0207
<https://adriansmith.house.gov/>

Capitol Hill 202-224-3121
State Capitol 402-471-2311
State Senator, District #
State Capitol; PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Governor Pete Ricketts

P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244; Fax 402-471-6031
<https://governor.nebraska.gov/>

Nebraskans for Peace
P.O. Box 83466
Lincoln, NE 68501-3466

Phone:402-475-4620/Fax:475-4624
nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org
www.nebraskansforpeace.org

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HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

Nebraska is having a Flint, Michigan moment

The environmental emergency unfolding 30 miles northeast of Lincoln could read like the screenplay for a dumb and dumber adventure some dudes dream up to pay their gambling debts. AltEn scored over a billion tons of toxic waste since 2015, nearly all the unsold/unused bags of seed treated with fungicides and pesticides from North America, all cheap or free! They made ethanol and lime green toxic sludge causing stench and bee die-off and dead birds. State officials declined

to be interviewed by British paper *The Guardian*, but a water permit specialist at the Nebraska Department of Energy and Environment (NDEE) said he believed AltEn officials were only “hardworking people just trying to make a living.”

AltEn has ambition and ruthlessness, sure, but those folks just aren’t that bright. Maybe that will be AltEn’s defense in court. “We didn’t know that stuff is poisonous! If we call our project safe and legal, it is!”

Not funny. If Mead is the new Flint, Anytown could be the new Mead. A lasting wound to the Earth. A cautionary place.

Anne Hubbard’s powerful “Midlands Voices” piece in the *Omaha World-Herald* says, “State regulations seem lax regarding the use of treated seed. Government regulators seemed slow to respond and ineffective in their enforcement until very recently. According to what I have read, there were plenty of tests show-