

## NGO SUSTAINABILITY



LATEST NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY +  
NO. 130 / April 11

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET  
[ngosustainability@gmail.com](mailto:ngosustainability@gmail.com) / [unngosustainability.org](http://unngosustainability.org)

*"The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share."*  
-Lady Bird Johnson

Art Cooley

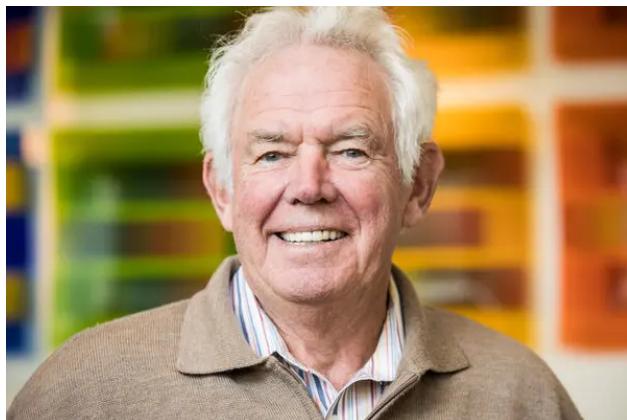


Photo: John Rae

**Art Cooley**, was a high school biology teacher who was part of a small band of people whose concerns about issues like the toxicity of the pesticide DDT led them in the late 1960s to start the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which went on to become one of the nation's largest environmental organizations. Cooley died on Sunday January 30, 2022 in Grand Junction, Colorado at the age of 87. In the fall of 1965, he and about two dozen scientists, conservationists and high school students began gathering monthly in their homes in New York's Long Island. They discussed environmental issues facing Island including preserving wildlife habitats and solutions to address the issue of groundwater

pollution, and voiced their hopes for policy changes through letters to government officials and newspapers. Mr. Cooley, who was teaching at Bellport High School in Brookhaven, became the group's unofficial leader. Cooley and his associates used science to challenge industry groups in court and helped establish the right of ordinary citizens to sue the government to protect human health and the environment. Today, the EDF Today, is one of the world's leading environmental organizations. In the U.S, Fortune magazine called their board one of the country's most influential nonprofit boards, bringing the right people together to solve environmental challenges from many different angles.



Photo: Suki Dhanda/The Observer

### **“Except for the Lone Wave” by Grace Nichols**

Grace Nichols is a poet whose work has been central to our understanding of the important cultural Caribbean-British connection for nearly 3 decades. From her first collection, *I Is a Long Memoried-Woman* (1983), to her more recent work such as *Picasso, I Want My Face Back* (2009), she has uncovered with a disquieting lyricism and humor the various facets of life as a woman and as an immigrant living in the UK.

*Like a heiress drawn  
to her light-reflecting jewels,  
Atlantic draws me to the mirror  
of my oceanic small days  
and the old seawall, so beloved by all.  
But Atlantic is far out,  
beach deserted in the mid-day sun  
except for the lone wave of rubbish –  
old car tyres, plastic bottles,  
styrofoam cups –  
rightly tossed back  
by an ocean’s moodswings.  
Undisturbed, not even by a seabird,  
I stand and gaze into the tradewinds –  
discovering that the sun  
is the only eldorado, the only gold  
whose rays will grace and sear our skins.  
Like a tourist, I head back  
to the sanctuary of my hotel room  
to dwell on change and age  
and our brooding planet  
in the air-conditioned darkness.*

**“Clearing the Air: Decarbonization Technologies Take a Giant Step Forward”**  
*State of the Planet Blog*, by Mary Denoia



*Photo: Kevin Krajick*

A number of scholars and scientists are developing decarbonization strategies to enable the earth to naturally take back carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere. The current CO<sub>2</sub> levels are higher than at any point in the past 800,000 years, and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) warns that despite a slight decrease in the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels because of the pandemic, the rise in the level will soon exceed 3°C, beyond the Paris Agreement target of 1.5°C by 2030. Consequently, companies are getting involved by adapting strategies developed by experts to naturally remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the air and provide a permanent storage for them below the earth surface in the form of solid carbonate minerals.

[Full Article](#)

**“Sustainable Groundwater Use Could Be Answer to Africa’s Water Issues”**  
*ScienceDaily* by University of Texas at Austin



*Photo: Smart water Magazine*

A research conducted by University of Texas - Austin tracked long term water storage gains and losses across Africa’s 13 major aquifers and found opportunities for sustainable withdrawal of groundwater across much of the continent. The study looked at NASA’s GRACE satellites and created an 18-year picture of aquifers from 2002-2020 discovered that even though certain Sub-Saharan aquifers sometimes faced water level declines, the levels consistently and quickly recovered during rainy periods, which helps guard against overuse. Irrigation in North Africa led to decreases in groundwater levels, yet the volume of water in these aquifers provides an extra buffer.

[Full Article](#)

**“US fossil fuel industry leaps on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine to argue for more drilling”** *The Guardian* by Oliver Milman



*Photo: Andrew Lichtenstein*

The US oil and gas industry is using Russia’s invasion of Ukraine to pressure the Biden administration to open up and loosen the *tight* regulations of lands and ocean for domestic drilling by large companies trying to boost their fossil fuel extraction. The American Petroleum Institute (API) is requesting the White House to “ensure energy security at home and abroad” by allowing more oil and gas drilling on public lands, extending drilling in US waters and easing regulations faced by fossil fuel firms. There is however a mixed reaction from republicans, environmental groups and scientists as each group fights to protect their interests. Although The development of solar and wind power has grown strongly in the US in recent years, fossil fuels still account for about 80% of domestic energy consumption.

[Full Article](#)

**“Solar developer has plan to turn oil wells into energy storage”** *The Power News* by Darrel Proctor



*Photo: Shell*

A California developer of concentrated solar power (CSP) systems has announced an innovation that it says combines the company’s technologies to turn existing oil wells into energy storage sites that can provide clean energy. Tectonic Sun is an electricity generation technology that when paired with the company’s Hylux solar thermal solution can provide “zero-carbon electricity” from oil wells “while reducing emissions during the extraction process at enhanced oil recovery [EOR] sites.” The new system can provide emissions-free power with 80% capacity factor for use at any time of day or night throughout the year. According to the company, this technology differs from other geothermal projects at oil and gas wells, such as those being developed for bitcoin mining. It is estimated that the statewide potential energy storage capacity from this technology would exceed the combined generation from California’s natural gas-fired power plants.

[Full Article](#)

**“Natural gas flares likely source of respiratory illness spike”** *ScienceDaily* by Washington State University



*Photo: News Break*

A paper published by the Journal of Public Economics examines the environmental health costs of flaring, or burning natural gas by-products during crude oil extraction, in North Dakota between 2007 and 2015. A flare of natural gas is not just correlated but is the cause for more hospital visits surrounding respiratory health in North Dakota because of the rapid expansion of shale oil's industry that was ill-equipped for cleaning and processing. The people that are experiencing the health effects were getting fewer than 20% of the benefits of oil production. That is a fact consistent with the idea that polluters and those polluted have disproportionate shares of the effects. The impact on a low density state between the years of regulation and non-regulating made the difference of about 11,000 more hospital visits for respiratory health.

[Full Article](#)

**Half of Ukraine's renewables threatened with destruction, industry body says”** *Renewables Now* by Ivan Shumkov



*Photo: Scatec*

Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine poses threat to half of local renewable energy plants as roughly 47% of Ukraine's installed renewables capacity is located in regions where active hostilities are currently taking place. The Ukrainian Association of Renewable Energy (UARE) estimates that over the past 10 years, more than USD 12 billion (EUR 10.9bn) has been invested in Ukraine's renewable energy industry to reach an installed capacity of 9,500 MW as of the start of this year. However, the destruction of wind turbines and solar panels, electrical equipment and substations, as well as power transmission lines due to the invasion will have serious threats to the country's energy sector. It noted that the Ukrainian renewable energy sector will turn to international courts to demand compensation from Russia.

[Full Article](#)

**“IPCC depicts unfolding climate emergency”**  
*DW News by Stuart Braun*



*Photo: Messay Teklu*

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report details a widespread climate catastrophe, along with ways to address and fund adaptation and resilience in vulnerable regions. The report singles out Africa, Asia, Central and South America, small island nations and the Arctic as areas that are especially being impacted by heatwaves, droughts, floods and rising seas and extreme weather experiences, that are also driving biodiversity loss and mass mortalities in trees and coral species. In response to worsening global climate impacts, the report specifically refers to "equity and justice" for impacted communities and especially vulnerable communities in less economically developed countries.

The UN Secretary-general describes the report as an atlas of human suffering and damning indictment of failed climate leadership.

[Full Article](#)

**“Thousands evacuate worst Australian floods in decades”** NPR News by The Associated Press



*Photo: Fraser Coast Regional Council*

As Australia experiences severe flood waters after heavy rainfall, tens of thousands of people had been ordered to evacuate their homes and many more preparing to flee as parts of Australia's southeast coast gets inundated by the worst flooding in decades. Australia also suffered from fires and drought in 2019.

According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Australia's fire risk “has gone beyond worst-case scenarios.” It destroyed more than 3,000 homes and razed 19 million hectares (47 million acres) of farmland and forests. The flood waters are also moving south into New South Wales from Queensland state in the worst disaster in the region since what was described as a once-in-a-century event in 2011.

[Full Article](#)

*Each week, our interns at NGO Sustainability choose special topics of interest to report on. We believe our interns should explore issues they are passionate about within the sustainability field and we look forward to sharing some of the most interesting aspects of this work with you. Here is Intern Didace Report on Home Compostable bags.*

## **Home Compostable Bags**

### **TUV Austria Bags**

OK Compost TUV Austria bags are made of corn and plant starch, and they decompose in a compost environment. They are either labeled INDUSTRIAL--to mean they decompose in an industrial facility--or HOME--to mean that they can compost at low temperatures in a home environment. They are not just biodegradable as when they are decomposed by microorganisms, they convert into good quality compost.

TUV Austria itself does not produce these bags, but rather is an independent certification body authorized by European Bioplastics that awards the OK Compost Home label, since 2003, to products that are compliant with the European Norm about compostability of packaging (EN13432). Woolovers, (England) is one of the first retailers in the world to introduce these starch-based bags that can be put in green recycling at home.



### **Company Highlight: Elevate Packaging**

**ELEVATE  
PACKAGING**

The first and only certified compostable label in North America is based in **Chicago, Illinois**. A leader in sustainable packaging since 2000, Elevate packaging has a mission to “revolutionize the packaging and adhesive label industry by providing the most innovative and best-in-class American-made sustainable packaging and labels.”

Elevate Packaging compostable items must meet ASTM D6400 or ASTM D6868 tests and comply with all Federal Trade Commission (FTC) laws and guidelines.

**Products:** Bags, pouches, labels

**Industries:** natural food, institutional food service, coffee, tea, cannabis, apparel, body care, and more

**Website:** <https://elevatepackaging.com/>

## Other Big Biodegradable Plastic Companies Across the World

Unlike Elevate Packaging, these companies produce biodegradable plastics that are only compostable in industry facilities at higher temperatures and in specific conditions. Western Europe is the leader in the field, although the US is also well-represented.

Italy	Novamont, Matrica, Versalis
France	Arkema, Reverdia, Total Corbion PLA
Germany	Succinity, Synvina, BASF
USA	Dupont, Genomatica, Nature Works, Lanzatech, Verdezyne
Belgium	Solvay, Avantium
Japan	Toray

## Cost Analysis of Home Compostable Bags

- Since home compostable goods are made from food nutrients (starch), they depend heavily on the price of food commodities such as potatoes and corn. As such, they are susceptible to bigger macroeconomic fluctuations, including the oil prices. Unlike traditional polyethylene plastics, they are more expensive at the market.

- However, the advantage of these bags is that they are not just biodegradable, but they also decompose into good compost even in a casual home environment. Therefore, their utility exceeds packaging, which could be one way to offset their high prices.
- A 2019 study conducted by the Bryn Mawr Trust compares the prices of traditional plastic bags, reusable paper bags, and compostable bags.

	<b>Traditional Plastic Bags</b>	<b>Paper Bags</b>	<b>Compostable Plastic Bags</b>
Market cost per bag	1 penny	4-5 cents	8-10 cents

Producer: Roma Stibravy, President

Editors: Tanatswa Gawe(Hofstra University), Naim Mohammed( University of Connecticut)

Contributors: NGO Sustainability Interns

**BECOME A MEMBER OF NGO SUSTAINABILITY!**

[unngosustainability.org](http://unngosustainability.org)

**CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP ALSO AVAILABLE**