

Green Mission News

June 2012 Green Mission News

External Article Links:

- Open Seeds: Biopiracy and the Patenting of Life

From Global Research TV- Backed by legal precedent and armed with seemingly inexhaustible lobbying funds, a handful of multinationals are attempting to use patents on life itself to monopolize the biosphere... interviews with Vandana Shiva

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPMd4u1MCDg>

<http://www.foodrevolution.org/>



Seed knowledge is a collective tradition, a common resource of society- an example of open source intelligence.

- Can Renewable Energy Sustain Consumer Societies?

Vandana Shiva on: Biodiversity and the patenting of life (15 minutes)

<http://www.countercurrents.org/alexander280412.htm>

- Farm Sanctuary works to inspire change in the way society views and treats farm animals

<http://www.farmsanctuary.org/>

- Michigan DNR Going Hog Wild

<http://www.farmtoconsumer.org/michigan-dnr-going-hog-wild.htm>

http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=109675394448&story_fbid=10150748444329449

- Study shows effects of maternal & fetal exposure to pesticides

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/325460#ixzz1vviiMPIM>

- Farming Groups Supporting Dow's Controversial Genetically Modified Corn Have Financial And Executive Backing From Agricultural Biotech Industry

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/340342/20120512/trade-groups-dow-agent-orange-corn-usda.htm>

- Humanity's Alienation from Food Production (5 minute video)

<http://www.5min.com/Video/Humanitys-Alienation-from-Food-Production-315088772>

- Corn Ethanol: Growing Food, Feed, Fiber ... and Fuel?

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/sustainable-farming/corn-ethanol-ze0z1205zsie.aspx#ixzz1u6flisZd>

- A Short History of the Pesticide Lobby:

Chemical Agriculture Goes to the Mattresses

<http://www.enviroblog.org/2012/05/chemical-agriculture-goes-to-the-mattresses.html>

- How Much Life Is in the Sea?

<http://www.cbd.int/idb/2012/>

- Free Guide Brings Science of Sustainability to Meetings

<http://www.meetingsfocus.com/NewsEvents/IndustryNews/IndustryNewsDetails/tabid/138/ArticleID/18416/Default.aspx>

- Digging deeper on restoration jobs

<http://blog.ecotrust.org/tag/restoration-economy/>

- Norwegian ad to encourage recycling cartons, (part english part norwegian with subs)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHKdpkSQE5k>

“how many squirrels must die?”

- Deciphering Eco-Labels

<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/campaign/coolfoods/navigating-the-supermarket/deciphering-eco-labels/>

- Increase in cancers and fertility problems may be caused by household chemicals and pharmaceutical

www.eea.europa.eu/pressroom/newsreleases/increase-in-cancers-and-fertility

- Organic production not keeping up with demand

<http://www.mywindsornow.com/article/20120512/BUSINESS/705129997/1040&ParentProfile=1001>

- Zero Landfill Is Not Zero Waste

<http://www.jgpress.com/archives/free/002380.html>

- Can Fish Eco-Labeling be Trusted?

<http://www.seaturtles.org/article.php?id=2294>

- LIVING PLANET REPORT 2012

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/LivingPlanetReport/index.html>

- No shame: ACC plunges to new low in fighting your right to know

<http://blogs.edf.org/nanotechnology/2012/05/21/no-shame-acc-plunges-to-new-low-in-fighting-your-right-to-know/#more-1847>

- The Center for an Agricultural Economy

www.hardwickagriculture.org

- Mass Action against GMO Wheat

www.taketheflourback.org/

- Making recycling make sense

how2recycle.info/

- In.gredients: Austin's Zero-Waste, Package-Free Grocery Store

www.bonappetit.com/blogsandforums/blogs/badaily/2012/05/austin-zero-waste-grocery-store.html

- Chilean Fish Farms and the Tragedy of the Commons

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2012/04/chilean-fish-farms-and-the-tragedy-of-the-commons/>

- Paul Hawken at The New School, March 2012 (hour video)

<http://vimeo.com/41505235>

- Tracking the localvores

<http://bangordailynews.com/2012/05/08/health/new-index-ranks-vermont-tops-in-locally-grown-food/>

- Vermont tops Strolling of the Heifers Locavore Index; state tops nation in local food availability

<http://www.strollingoftheheifers.com/component/content/article/181-locavore-index-2012sting>.

- Reuse Alliance

www.reusealliance.org

- Join us at ReuseConex2012 International Reuse Conference & Expo!
October 18-20, 2012; Portland DoubleTree; Portland, OR
<http://www.reuseconex.org>

“A Study of the Economic Activity of Minnesota’s Reuse, Repair and Rental Sectors”

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/pyri7c6>

- Recycled resin demand drives support for EPR
www.plasticsnews.com/headlines2.html?id=25508

Full Length Articles Below:

- Kraft Foods shareholders want company to increase recycling
- Bicycle Brilliance and the Greening of America’s Streets
- A Last (Chemical) Gasp for Bees?

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Friday, May 25, 2012

Some Kraft Foods shareholders want company to increase recycling

By Shawn Wright

A quarter of [Kraft Foods Inc.](#)'s shareholders want the company to report on the feasibility of adopting extended producer responsibility systems that can increase recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions.

The first-of-its-kind vote, where 25% of shareholders expressed a need for change, took place during the [Kraft's](#) annual meeting in Skokie, Ill., according to a news release.

The proposal was filed by [As You Sow](#), a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building and legal strategies.

Northfield, Ill.-based Kraft is likely allowing millions of dollars' worth of resources from its

post-consumer products to go to a landfill, according to As You Sow.

"Kraft -- a major user of packaging worldwide -- has been silent on this critical sustainability issue," Conrad MacKerron, senior program director at As You Sow, said in a statement. "At a time when governments across the country are focusing on conserving natural resources, reducing waste, and finding it increasingly difficult to maintain services in the face of budget deficits, Kraft and its peers must take responsibility for the massive amount of packaging waste they generate in the U.S., as they have done in many other countries."

Link:

<http://www.wasterecyclingnews.com/article/20120525/NEWS03/120529899?template=printarticle>

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Published on Thursday, May 31, 2012

Bicycle Brilliance and the Greening of America's Streets

The Green Lane Project brings bicycling into the 21st century—with positive results for the nation's health, economy, environment and commutes

by [Jay Walljasper](#)

You can glimpse the future right now in forward-looking American cities—a few blocks here, a mile there where people riding bicycles are protected from rushing cars and trucks.

Chicago's Kinzie Street, just north of downtown, offers a good picture of this transportation transformation. New bike lanes are marked with bright green paint and separated from motor traffic by a series of plastic posts. This means bicyclists glide through the busy area in the safety of their own space on the road. Pedestrians are thankful that bikes no longer seek refuge on the sidewalks, and many drivers appreciate the clear, orderly delineation about where bikes and cars belong.

"Most of all this is a safety project," notes Chicago's Transportation Commissioner Gabe Klein. "We saw bikes go up from a 22 percent share of traffic to 52 percent of traffic on the street with only a negligible change in motorists' time, but a drop in their speeds. That makes everyone safer."

Klein heralds this new style of bike lane as one way to improve urban mobility in an era of budget shortfalls. "They're dirt cheap to build compared to road projects."

"The Kinzie project was discombobulating to the public when it first went in," notes Alderman Margaret Laurino, chair of the city council's Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee. "Business owners had questions. But now people understand it and we're

ready to do more.”

“Protected bike lanes are not just for diehard bicyclists—they offer a level of safety and confidence for less experienced riders,” adds Rey Colón, a Chicago alderman who first saw how well these innovations work on a trip to Seville, Spain.

Mayor Rahm Emmanuel campaigned on the promise of building 100 miles of these “green lanes” over the next four years to heighten the city’s appeal to new businesses. After the protected bike lane opened on Kinzie Street last year, more were installed on Jackson Boulevard and 18th Street on the city’s Near West Side. Thirteen more miles are planned this summer throughout the city. (The Chicago suburb of Evanston just announced plans to install protected bike lanes on one of its busy streets.)

Green Lanes Mean Go

People on bikes everywhere feel more safe and comfortable on busy streets with a physical barrier between them and motor vehicles. In some places it’s a plastic post or line of parked cars. In others it’s a curb, planter or slightly elevated bike lanes. But no matter what separates people on bikes from people in cars, the results are hefty increases in the number and variety of people bicycling.

“We’ve seen biking almost triple on parts of 15th Street NW since installing a protected bike lane last year,” reports Jim Sebastian, Active Transportation Project Manager for the District of Columbia. “And we’re seeing different kinds of cyclists beyond the Lycra crowd. People in business suits, high heels, families out for a ride, more younger and older people.”

This particular bike lane—one of more than 50 protected bikeways built recently in at least 20 cities from New York to Minneapolis to Long Beach, California—is richly symbolic for Americans. It follows 15th St. NW to the White House.

“This is what cities of the future are doing to attract businesses and young people,” notes Andy Clarke, president of the League of American Bicyclists. “People don’t want to drive all the time; they want a choice.”

The Greening of America’s Streets

The Green Lane Project, an initiative to showcase these next-generation transportation improvements, was launched this week (May 31) in six U.S. cities: Chicago, Washington D.C., Memphis, Austin, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. The effort is coordinated by the Bikes Belong Foundation. Advisors to the project include New York City Department of Transportation (which has already pioneered 5 miles of protected lanes on six streets), the National Association of City Transportation Officials and the League of American Bicyclists. Major funders include Volkswagen of America, SRAM, Interbike, the Taiwan Bicycle Exporters Association and the Bikes Belong Coalition.

“Green lanes are not just a color on the street. They are paths to better cities.”

The name “green lane” was chosen not only to draw attention to the typical color of protected bike lanes but also to highlight their potential in improving the urban

environment and saving on transportation costs. “Green lanes are not just a color on the street. They are paths to better cities,” the project’s website explains, adding that more people on bikes eases congestion and boosts residents’ health, sense of community and economic opportunities.

The project will connect elected officials, city planners, traffic engineers, bike advocates and citizens in these six cities to share experiences, trade data and swap ideas, says Project Director Martha Roskowski. Until this year she ran GO Boulder, the alternative transportation effort at the city of Boulder, Colorado, which built its first protected bike lane in the early 1990s.

“For cities, green Lanes are like finding a whole new drawer of tools in your toolbox,” Roskowski notes. “Our mission is to expand the knowledge on how to use these tools. How to get them on the ground. How to fine tune them. How to make them work best.”

Five years ago, these designs were barely on the horizon in the U.S. although they’ve been standard in Europe for decades. “Today, cities across the country are looking to green lanes to tame busy streets and connect missing links in the bicycling network,” she says. She points to the 2011 publication of a design guide by the National Association of City Transportation Officials as a key factor creating momentum for green lanes. “The guide shows cities how to combine existing, approved design elements in new ways to create these spaces,” says Roskowski

“The idea is to create the kind of bike networks that will attract the 60 percent of all Americans who say they would bike more if they felt safer,” says Randy Neufeld, a longtime bike advocate in Chicago who as Director of the SRAM Cycling Fund helped start the Green Lane Project. “It’s about helping people from 8 to 80 to feel safe biking on city streets.”

The six Green Lane Project cities will receive technical assistance and support, backed by targeted grants to help carry out their plans. Other cities around the country will soon be able to tap into a comprehensive resource center of data, documentation and best practices compiled by the project.

Protected bike lanes are often accompanied by other safety improvements—paint that marks bicyclists’ path through intersections; designated spaces at stoplights that give two-wheel traffic a slight head start; and traffic signals dedicated to people on bikes. All these measures reduce car/bike collisions by making people on bikes more visible and clearly assigning priority at intersections. In addition, many cities around the country are also building buffered bike lanes, where wide patches of paint rather than physical barriers separate bicyclists from cars and trucks.

The proliferation of new bikesharing systems—where people can conveniently rent bikes at on-street stations with a credit card and return them to another station near their destination—creates new demand for green lanes by getting more riders on the streets. Bike share is now running full board in Washington, Denver, Boston, Minneapolis, Chattanooga and Miami Beach and coming soon to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities. Roskowski notes that the recent rise of bikesharing and protected bike lanes are linked. “Bikeshare puts new people on bikes who want safer, more comfortable place to ride.”

Bikes—Not Just for Ultra Fit Athletes

The United States has witnessed a boom in bicycling over the past 15 years, proving that bikes aren't just for kids and recreational riders anymore. They are an essential component of 21st Century transportation systems that can cut congestion on crowded streets, save money in transportation budgets, improve traffic safety and reduce pollution.

The number of American commuting to work by bike has climbed 43 percent since 2000, according to census figures. And numbers are even higher in places making their streets more accommodating for bicyclists. New York City, Boston, Seattle and Minneapolis-St. Paul have all doubled the number of people on bikes over the past five years. In Portland, Oregon, 6 percent of all commuters travel to work by bike—an achievement matched by smaller cities such as Gainesville, Florida; Madison, Wisconsin; and Cambridge, Massachusetts—and surpassed in Boulder, Colorado (10 percent) and Davis, California (22 percent).

Yet overall, America still lags behind many Western nations in embracing bikes as a form of transportation. Only one percent of all trips nationally are made by people on bicycles today (up from 0.43 percent a few years ago). There are many explanations—some practical, some philosophical—for why most Americans bike infrequently.

Many cities are paying particular attention to make sure that low-income and minority communities—where many families don't own cars and others are financially strapped by the rising costs of operating one—have access to state-of-the-art biking facilities.

The sprawling layout of many cities and suburbs is one obvious cause. The decline of physical activity among many Americans, even kids, is a likely contributing factor. Some observers point to automobiles' long reign as a status symbol. Others suggest that many Americans view bicycling as a white, upper-middle class hobby, not as a form of transportation for average families. However a recent study found that 21 percent of all bike trips in the U.S. are made by people of color.

Many cities are paying particular attention to make sure that low-income and minority communities—where many families don't own cars and others are financially strapped by the rising costs of operating one—have access to state-of-the-art biking facilities. With a 63 percent African-American population, Memphis was selected as one of the six Green Lane cities in part because of Mayor AC Wharton Jr.'s strong support for biking as essential, not a frill, for a city with one of the highest diabetes rates in the country and where 15 percent of households have no access to a car.

Danny Solis—a Latino alderman representing a district on Chicago's West Side with a high percentage of Mexican-Americans, African-Americans and Asian-Americans—says good bike lanes are important to improving public safety and economic vitality in lower-income communities. "It increases interaction between neighbors, which is a boost for businesses and keeps the gangbangers away."

Encouraging more people to ride bikes offers substantial rewards for all Americans, whether they ride a bike or not, by using streets more efficiently to move people and offering an economical choices in transportation as well as addressing looming

problems such as the obesity epidemic and volatile fuel prices. And it gets even better from there—the more people ride, the more benefits we'll all see.

Nobody Said It Was Going to Be Easy

Of course, any proposal to reconfigure the streets—even in modest ways—can stir opposition. It's true that in some cases, carving out space for people on bikes means reducing parking spaces or travel lanes for cars. In other designs, parking and travel lanes stay the same as existing bike lanes are upgraded with the addition of bollards, or parking is rearranged so that bike lanes run adjacent to the curb,.

A follow up study tracking the 15th Street Green Lanes in Washington found that 78 percent of people living nearby view the project as a neighborhood amenity. And in New York City, protected bike lanes sparked a heated debate in recent years when politically well-connected figures lobbied to rip them out. But a slew of opinion polls showed that most city residents approved of the changes, even if they themselves did not ride bikes, and the lanes stayed.

Minneapolis Mayor RT Rybak acknowledges a “bikelash” is possible when Green Lanes are first introduced in a community, but notes that in this era of shrinking municipal budgets, “We need to get more use from all the streets we already have. It really is the idea that bikes belong.”

How the U.S. Can Become a World Leader

It's not Utopian to think that the United States could become a world leader in bicycling. Americans are an enterprising people, who are capable of almost anything when we apply our ingenuity and technical expertise toward a goal. Who says we can't match Germany (where 10 percent of all trips are made by bike), Denmark (18 percent) or even the Netherlands (27 percent), all of which are wealthy nations like us where most people own cars?

The ultimate goal of the Green Lane Project is to make bicycling feel as normal to Americans as shopping for groceries or walking the dog.

Protected bike lanes, commonplace throughout Europe and Asia, are a big part of how we accomplish this. Making people feel safer on the streets was how the Netherlands' engineered a 100 percent increase in bicycling since the 1970s, as well as Germany's even more dramatic rise from 2 to 10 percent of all trips over the past 15 years. Even a city like Seville, Spain, where almost no one biked a few years ago now boasts a 6-7 percent bike mode share thanks to a network of protected bike lanes built since 2007.

In the United States, we tend to view bicyclists as a unique breed willing to brave city traffic. Bicyclists in Europe are considered no different than anyone else. In the Netherlands, for example, 55 percent of all riders are women, compared to about 25 percent here. Dutch bicyclists over 55 ride at comparable rates to the rest of the population, which is far different than here. And 55 percent of school-age children in the Netherlands ride to school on a regular basis. In the U.S. only 16 percent of kids either bike or walk regularly, down from 42 percent in 1969.

The ultimate goal of the Green Lane Project is to make bicycling feel as normal to Americans as shopping for groceries or walking the dog.

A Tale of Six Cities

Chicago and the five other cities taking part in the Green Lane Project (chosen from a field of 43 applicants) are undertaking ambitious efforts over the next two years to build protected lanes and other 21st century bike facilities. They aim to show how Americans can enjoy the numerous benefits of increased biking—and in the process reap the rewards of standing out as a leader in urban quality-of-life.

***San Francisco**— San Francisco debuted one of the country's first protected bikeways on its main commercial thoroughfare Market Street in 2009, which will be expanded as part of the city's Green Lanes strategy. A new lane recently opened on Golden Gate Park's JFK Drive and more are planned for the Civic Center, SOMA and Castro districts and potentially the Embarcadero, a road winding along the bayfront.

"Every person bicycling is opening up space on the streets and a parking space at the end of their journey," notes Leah Shahum, executive director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. "The city is projected to grow in coming decades but we have no more space to move people around. It makes smart fiscal sense to invest in bicycling—it's the most inexpensive way to move more people."

***Austin**—City officials cut the ribbon April 23 for a protected bike lane running 4/10 of a mile on Rio Grande Street near the University of Texas campus, and as many as 10 are in the planning stage. "Green Lanes are safer, hands down," observes the city's bicycle program manager Annick Beudet. "A lot of people are still afraid to get on a bike here so that makes Green Lanes very important to us."

Mayor Lee Leffingwell declares, "As one of the most congested cities of our size nationally, bicycling is certainly a realistic way to address this problem. But I also value the contribution to the economy that comes with the provision of smart transportation options that attract major employers to Austin."

***Portland**—As the large American city with arguably the best network of on-street bikeways and undeniably the highest ridership, Portland looks to Green Lanes as the best way to make sure the number of bicyclists continues to grow. "The more separation you create between people on bikes and fast-moving cars, the more people you will see on riding," says city bicycle coordinator Roger Geller. "And the more people biking the more benefits everyone gets in terms of health, community, safety and the environment."

Portland inaugurated its first Green Lane downtown and recently completed two others in the Northwest and Southwest quadrants of the city with more to come.

***Washington D.C.**— Washington striped its first on-street bike lane 40 years ago, but bicycling in the city really took off with the advent of the Capital Bikeshare program in 2010 and the protected bike lane on 15th St. NW, which connects to a popular buffered bike lane on Pennsylvania Avenue leading all the way to the U.S. Capitol. Another Green Lane on L Street is up next. Overall, Washington has seen an 80 percent increase in bicycling since 2007.

Capital Bikeshare is currently the nation's largest with 1200 bikes (2800 by the end of the year) available for short term rental at 180 stations, which average 6000 rides a day by DC residents, commuters and tourists. (New York is set to launch a system this

summer that will number 10,000 bikes by next year.)

“This is the time of the bicycle,” observes Ellen Jones, chair of Washington’s Bicycle Advisory Council and a director of the Downtown Business Improvement District.

“People want to live and work in places where they have a lot of choices for how to get around. That makes you feel great about a place like Washington.”

***Memphis**— Mayor AC Wharton Jr. is behind the push to make Memphis a bicycling leader among Sun Belt cities. “We believe in the power of bicycle facilities to enhance the health, economy and safety of our community,” he says.

Work on the city’s first Green Lane, a 1½ mile connection between a popular park and a well-traveled rail-trail, starts soon. Bikeway/Pedestrian Coordinator Kyle Wagenschutz, says, “We’re not building trails just for people who already bike—we want to energize the growth of cycling in the city as a legitimate sources of transportation.”

Memphis, like most cities, does not promote bicycling simply as a transportation policy, but also as economic development strategy. “The job recruiters at FedEx and our medical centers talk about the importance of being a good place to bike in attracting talent here,” Wagenschutz says. “Recently I met with a partner at the law firm, Bass, Berry & Sims, who told me he did not ride a bike and was not interested in riding a bike, but he wanted to tell us how appreciative he is for how helpful all the bike improvements have been in recruiting young lawyers to their firm.”

This article first appeared on BikesBelong.org. Please visit their website for more information on all their work.

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A Last (Chemical) Gasp for Bees?

Colony collapse disorder threatens food crops valued at \$15 billion a year. New research says farm chemicals put our food system at risk.

by Shannan Stoll

Newly published scientific evidence is bolstering calls for greater regulation of some of the world’s most widely used pesticides and genetically modified crops.

Earlier this year, three independent studies linked agricultural insecticides to colony collapse disorder, a phenomenon that leads honeybees to abandon their hives.

Beekeepers have reported alarming losses in their hives over the last six years. The

USDA reports the loss in the United States was about 30 percent in the winter of 2010-2011.

Bees are crucial pollinators in the ecosystem. Their loss also impacts the estimated \$15 billion worth of fruit and vegetable crops that are pollinated by bees in the United States.

The studies, conducted in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, all pointed to neonicotinoids, a class of chemicals used widely in U.S. corn production, as likely contributors to colony collapse disorder. The findings challenged the EPA's position—based on studies by Bayer CropScience, a major producer of the neonicotinoid clothianidin—that bees are only exposed to small, benign amounts of these insecticides.

The new studies found that bees are exposed to potentially lethal amounts of neonicotinoids in pollen and in dust churned up by farm equipment. They also found that exposure to neonicotinoids can reduce the number of queen bees and disorient worker bees.

An alliance of beekeepers and environmental groups filed a petition on March 21 asking the EPA to block the use of clothianidin in agricultural fields until the EPA conducts a sound scientific review of the chemicals.

Meanwhile, farm chemicals and the biotech industry have come under fire for the problem of pest resistance. Some weeds and bugs have become less susceptible or immune to the chemicals or biotechnology used to control them.

In March, national experts on corn pests published a letter to the EPA describing how rapidly rootworms are becoming resistant to the larvae-killing gene in Monsanto's genetically engineered "Bt" corn. The letter warns that the EPA should move to regulate Bt corn—by requiring, for example, non-GM buffer zones—with "some sense of urgency."

In a similarly alarming trend, Monsanto's "Roundup Ready" soy and corn, which are genetically modified to tolerate the active ingredient in Roundup, are associated with the creation of "super weeds." The widespread use of these crops has led farmers to vastly increased use of the herbicide, leading to the development of resistant weeds.

The agriculture industry has responded to Roundup's failure by developing new crop varieties resistant to another pesticide/herbicide, 2,4-D. An ingredient of Agent Orange, 2,4-D is linked to birth defects, hormone disruption, and cancer. Last December, Dow AgroSciences LLC asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to approve the new varieties for cultivation.