



Drumbeat: July 31, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 31, 2009 - 10:12am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Top 10 checklist: How societies can avoid 'ecocide'](#)

In his book "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed," Jared Diamond explores why some societies fall apart, and why others endure.

He uses the term "ecocide" to describe humanity's penchant for ignoring signs that current behavior is unsustainable, environmentally speaking, and effectively committing suicide.

Accepting that the human sphere exists within the larger biosphere, you might further generalize Diamond's idea to: "cultures that ignore the limits of the biosphere in which they exist tend to fall apart."

But not every human society collapses. Some heed the warning signs, adjust their behavior, and keep on keeping on. Human cultures can evolve to fit within – rather than overstep – environmental limits. Mr. Diamond counts Java, Japan, and Tonga among his successful case studies; Easter Islanders, the Greenland Vikings, and the Anasazi of the Southwest failed, by his criteria.

So what made the difference? What do some cultures respond and change while others collapse? What are the attributes of long-term success?

[Norman Borlaug - Farmers Can Feed the World: Better seeds and fertilizers, not romantic myths, will let them do it](#)

Given the right tools, farmers have shown an uncanny ability to feed themselves and others, and to ignite the economic engine that will reverse the cycle of chronic poverty. And the escape from poverty offers a chance for greater political stability in their countries as well.

But just as the ground shifted beneath the Italian community of L'Aquila, so too has the political landscape heaved in other parts of the world, casting unfounded doubts on agricultural tools for farmers made through modern science, such as biotech corn in parts of Europe. Even here at home, some elements of popular culture romanticize older, inefficient production methods and shun fertilizers and pesticides, arguing that the U.S. should revert to producing only local organic food. People should be able to purchase organic food if they have the will and financial means to do so, but not at the

expense of the world's hungry—25,000 of whom die each day from malnutrition.

[House approves extending 'cash for clunkers'](#)

WASHINGTON - The House voted Friday to rush an additional \$2 billion into the popular but financially strapped "cash for clunkers" car purchase program.

The bill was approved on a vote of 316-109. House members acted within hours of learning from Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood that the program was running out of money.

[TNK-BP to Tap New Siberia Oil Fields to Boost Output](#)

(Bloomberg) -- TNK-BP, BP Plc's 50 percent-owned Russian venture, will start pumping oil from five new fields in Siberia in 2013 and 2014 to boost production as aging reserves go into decline.

The deposits may hold 7.2 billion barrels of oil equivalent, potentially adding 500,000 barrels a day of crude and gas to TNK-BP's output capacity, the company said in a presentation posted on its Web site this week. Some of the five fields, called Suzunskoye, Tagulskoye, Rospan, Messoyakha and Russkoye, are part of the Bolshekhetsky project.

[Low fuel margins drain S-Oil](#)

S-Oil Corp., Korea's third-biggest oil refiner, announced its second-quarter profit fell 81 percent, missing analyst estimates, on a drop in demand for diesel and jet fuel.

[CFTC Belatedly Discovers the Speculative Oil Bubble](#)

The argument of the believers in market fundamentals was that speculators invest in futures, rather than in physical supplies of oil so every month, they must trade contracts that are about to fall due for ones that will not mature for several months. That makes them big sellers of oil for prompt delivery and so they have no net impact on prices.

Nonsense. Buyers and sellers of futures which can be physically delivered, can buy or sell the spot / future (or a mix of the two) because they are exactly the same thing, just with a different delivery dates. The actual position where futures players "invest" (front month or further along the curve) is immaterial. What matters is the "net exposure" of their investments, i.e. if a pension fund is now long \$1bn of oil futures as a long-term investment, how they manage that exposure from futures expiry to expiry is less important than the fact that the demand curve for oil has shifted up by that \$1bn on an ongoing basis. Rolling the position which consists of a buy and a sell order to keep the

investment in the futures market, isn't the issue; it is only at initiation of the new position that the demand for the underlying commodity has increased. As more and more "investors" globally added commodities to their portfolios in 2007/8, from giant pension funds like Calpers to retail investors via energy ETFs, the "net exposure", net demand, and the equilibrium price for oil all soared.

[The all-new Toyota Prius – silence of the lanes](#)

Green cars have been branded overpriced, sluggish and ugly. Today, the most famous eco-car, the Toyota Prius, enters its third generation. Will the cleaner hybrid tempt buyers?

[Energy giants hunker down to slash costs](#)

The world's energy giants are increasingly cutting back in the face of slumping demand that they warn is not likely to pick up any time soon.

Little more than a year after oil jumped to its high of \$147 (U.S.) a barrel, the industry is chopping spending and jobs, and mulling other measures that would affect investors.

Hopes of a quick return to good times in the oil patch have been punctured by natural gas prices, which have barely budged upward in recent quarters, and crude prices, whose partial recovery has been damaged by the global recession.

Some of the industry's most influential voices now say the world shows no sign of regaining its energy appetite any time soon. As that view becomes more widespread, oil and gas companies – which already gouged spending plans last fall and this spring – are further trimming spending, shifting budgets and even, in one instance, using itself as a test case to spur much-needed demand.

[A New Approach to Fusion](#)

General Fusion, a startup in Vancouver, Canada, says it can build a prototype fusion power plant within the next decade and do it for less than a billion dollars. So far, it has raised \$13.5 million from public and private investors to help kick-start its ambitious effort.

Unlike the \$14 billion ITER project under way in France, General Fusion's approach doesn't rely on expensive superconducting magnets--called tokamaks--to contain the superheated plasma necessary to achieve and sustain a fusion reaction. Nor does the company require powerful lasers, such as those within the National Ignition Facility at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, to confine a plasma target and compress it to extreme temperatures until fusion occurs.

Instead, General Fusion says it can achieve "net gain"--that is, create a fusion reaction that gives off more energy than is needed to trigger it--using relatively low-tech, mechanical brute force and advanced digital control technologies that scientists could only dream of 30 years ago.

[The Path to Fusion Power](#)

There is a Saudi saying: "My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a plane. His son will ride a camel". Is this true? Very likely: yes. Oil will probably be largely exhausted in 50 years. Even using the US Geological Survey's estimate of the amount of remaining oil (which is significantly larger than all others), the peak of oil production cannot be much more than 20 years away (and many predict that production will peak in 5-10 years or even sooner, and then fall ~3% p.a.). Gas is expected to last a little longer. It is often said that there is enough Coal for over 200 years — but that is with current use. Use of coal is currently growing 4.5%/year, which turns 200 years into 50 years!

It is therefore clear that *we need to start preparing for the post fossil fuel era now.*

[South Africa: Hogan adamant on nuclear power](#)

PUBLIC Enterprises Minister Barbara Hogan reaffirmed her support for the government-backed nuclear energy project yesterday.

Hogan was the keynote speaker at a workshop hosted by the Industrial Development Corporation- and Eskom-sponsored nuclear power programme, the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor.

She said, considering the energy crisis, it was vital that nuclear energy development and component manufacturing be localised as much as possible, rather than relying on foreign suppliers. She said: "There is little doubt that nuclear is going to be one of the most important components of the country's energy requirements.

[Land issue skirts the heart of the Pemex refinery issue](#)

But this is at its core an oil and Pemex story, so let's consider this: Pemex's oil production peaked in 2004. Output is off by as much as 20 percent since then; over the last year production declined about 8 percent.

Recently announced results from the second quarter of 2009 – 2.59 million barrels a day production - underscore the continued decline. Meanwhile, the first half numbers also demonstrate that Pemex will have a tough time meeting its 2.75 million barrel a day average production target for 2009.

Thus, an impertinent but logical question for Pemex: Upon completion of the new refinery and other modifications, will the company be able to provide adequate crude oil supply for its revamped refining network?

[Cuba's frightening energy crisis](#)

HAVANA: It's hard to find a spare tire in Cuba these days, or a cup of yoghurt.

Air conditioners are shut off in the dead heat. Factories close at peak hours, and workers go without their government-subsidized lunches.

Cuba has ordered austere energy savings this summer, and the secretive Council of Ministers and Communist Party Central Committee met this week to consider more cuts to cope with budget deficits and plummeting export profits.

The communist government imposed conservation measures even as it continues to get free oil for services from Venezuela, fueling rumors that Cuba is selling President Hugo Chavez's crude on the side to raise cash.

[Argentina: Service station owners report shortages](#)

The association grouping petrol station owners reported an "unjustified" shortage of diesel fuel and blamed the government for the irregularities in the suppliers of fuels.

The organization also said sales have dropped at about 25 percent in 2009 from the previous year.

[ANALYSIS - Bewildered, big oil wants fruitful next Iraq round](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Deal-makers from the world's biggest energy firms will demand more from Iraq's second oil deal bid round since the U.S.-led invasion after many walked away bewildered and empty handed from the first round last month.

[Gazprom sees Sakhalin-1 gas deal with Exxon](#)

KHABAROVSK, Russia (Reuters) - Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom hopes this year to agree with U.S. energy major ExxonMobil Corp over gas supplies to a new far eastern pipeline, a senior Gazprom executive said on Friday.

Russia needs gas from the ExxonMobil-led Sakhalin-1 project to feed industrial growth in its Far East, a point emphasised by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin at a ceremony to launch welding of a major trunk pipeline that will run to the port of Vladivostok.

[Poland-Russia gas deal fails to materialise](#)

Poland has failed to strike a gas deal with Russia that would secure supplies sufficient to meet its needs starting in 2010, but talks would continue, the Economy Ministry said in a statement today.

The ministry said the sides could not agree over the functioning of Europolgaz, a joint venture between PGNiG and Gazprom that manages the Yamal pipeline in Poland.

[PDVSA, Repsol Could Barrel Out Billions from Heavy Oil Block](#)

A Venezuelan oil block being studied by Petroleos de Venezuela SA, or PdVSA, and Spain's Repsol YPF SA has up to 6 billion barrels of recoverable reserves, and production at the site could begin by 2012, Venezuelan officials said Wednesday.

[Cheap oil slams Chevron's quarterly profit](#)

NEW YORK - Chevron Corp. said Friday its second-quarter profit fell 71 percent as demand for crude oil and gasoline plunged.

Chevron, the second-largest U.S. oil company, said its net income amounted to \$1.75 billion, or 87 cents per share, for the three-month period that ended June 30. That compared with \$5.98 billion, or \$2.90 per share, in the same period last year.

[EnCana Doubles Cash Reward to Help Solve Dawson Creek Bombings](#)

EnCana Corporation has doubled its offer of a cash reward for helping solve the Dawson Creek bombings. EnCana is offering up to \$1 million cash for information directly leading to the arrest and prosecution of the individual or individuals responsible for the recent bombings at EnCana facilities in the Tomslake area near Dawson Creek, British Columbia. The reward, subject to the Terms and Conditions set out below, is intended to encourage anyone with information, including EnCana employees and contractors, help the police solve these crimes, stop any further attacks and help ensure the safety of the communities in and around Dawson Creek.

[U.S. energy future hinges on rapid rollout of emerging clean energy technologies](#)

America has the potential to solve its energy crisis over the next decade, but doing so requires a substantial immediate investment in the development and deployment of emerging clean energy technologies, said Mark S. Wrighton, chancellor of Washington

University in St. Louis and vice chair of a new National Resource Council report on America's energy challenges.

The key message of the report, said Wrighton, is that America's long-term energy viability hinges on its willingness to expedite the rollout of new and emerging technologies for improving energy efficiency, harvesting new forms of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[Part One – A decade of debate chugs on](#)

A new debate is emerging among Canadians about whether high-speed passenger trains are the answer to rising oil prices, traffic congestion, airport delays and environmental concerns.

Governments currently running massive deficits will have to decide whether a multibillion-dollar investment of public money in passenger trains that top 300 km/h – and their supporting infrastructure – can become either a silver bullet or a white elephant for the most heavily populated regions of the country.

[Solar Users Are Freeloaders, Says Xcel Energy](#)

While countries throughout Europe (and some U.S. states) are actively trying to encourage the use of rooftop solar panels with feed-in tariffs, Colorado utility Xcel Energy has decided to punish residents who want to go solar.

The utility is toying with the idea of charging a fee to all customers who install solar systems after April 2010. While Xcel claims that it will be minimal--\$23 annually for a Boulder home with a 4.5 kilowatt solar array--the Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association says that super-efficient homes could be charged up to \$200 or more.

[Texas wind farms reap N.C. dollars](#)

An answer to North Carolina's green energy challenge is blowing in the wind-swept mesas of Texas.

With the first deadlines fast approaching for North Carolina's renewable energy targets, power companies in this state are snapping up green certificates from out-of-state wind farms. The certificates don't buy actual electricity, but pay for credits needed to meet state targets.

[Environmentalist, author Bill McKibben calls for concerted action on environment news](#)

Bill McKibben, environmentalist, author, and founder of 350.org, took the stage at the American Center yesterday and stated in measured but forceful words that strong, powerful action needs to be taken very, very quickly if we want to maintain the climate we are accustomed to. McKibben's concern wasn't about what one person can do, because, he stated, though it may be 's "a noble and correct sentiment to react immediately," it's too late to act on a household, community, or campus level. His focus was on collectively exerting pressure on national governments.

[Vital La. oil port left vulnerable to hurricanes](#)

CAMINADA HEADLAND, La. — One of the nation's most important economic assets — the booming oil hub called Port Fourchon — is turning into a sitting duck for hurricanes as the beach that protects it from the Gulf of Mexico washes away.

The miles-long sand bank — blasted last year by hurricanes Gustav and Ike, and by Katrina and Rita three years before that — is nearly all that keeps the Gulf from inundating the pipelines and shipyards that handle 15 percent of all crude oil flowing to inland refineries.

Port Fourchon, about 70 miles south of New Orleans, support 90 percent of the Gulf's 3,700 offshore platforms and connects with the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port — the only U.S. port capable of handling the largest oil tankers. The offshore port is tied in by pipeline to about half of domestic refining capacity, most of it on the Gulf Coast.

Officials worry that unless work begins immediately to bolster the port's defenses, a direct hit from a strong Category 3 storm or worse could cripple the facility for weeks and create a national energy crisis overnight.

[Oil surges close to \\$67 a barrel in volatile week](#)

Oil prices surged above \$66 a barrel Thursday, rising in lockstep with major global indexes in what has become a very volatile week for energy markets.

With regulators meeting in Washington to consider new limits on speculators that some blame for wild swings in oil and gas prices, crude fell 6 percent Wednesday only to rebound by almost that much Thursday.

[Crude Oil May Decline as Supplies Extend Gains, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil may decline on speculation that U.S. inventories will extend gains as demand lags because of the recession, a survey of analysts showed.

Twenty-four of 35 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News, or 69 percent, said futures will fall through August 7. It's the most bearish response since March 2008. Six respondents, or 17 percent, forecast that prices will be little changed and five expected

an increase. Last week, 46 percent of analysts said oil would drop.

Inventories of distillate fuel, a category that includes diesel and heating oil, are at their highest level since January 1985. They climbed 2.1 million barrels to 162.6 million last week, an Energy Department report on July 29 showed.

Inventories of crude oil are 18 percent higher than they were at this time last year.

[BP Shuts Rotterdam Oil Refinery After Power Outage](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc shut its Rotterdam refinery this morning after an external supply failure cut power to Europe's second-largest oil processing plant.

[Abu Dhabi's Murban Oil Fall a Ninth Day as Refiners Cut Output](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Abu Dhabi's Murban crude oil fell for a ninth day as declining demand for fuels prompted refiners to run plants at reduced rates.

[Iraq fires head of state-owned oil company](#)

BAGHDAD (AFP) – The Iraqi government has fired the head of state-owned South Oil Company (SOC), who publicly criticised Baghdad's auctioning off of oil and gas fields to foreign energy giants, an oil ministry spokesman said on Thursday.

Fayadh Hassan Nima was replaced as SOC's chief executive by the head of the company's department of oil fields, Dia Jaafar, ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said.

[Petrochina boss set for BP visit](#)

PetroChina's chairman Jiang Jiemin will travel to London next week to meet with BP's top management, with the two oil giants' landmark co-operations in Iraq among agenda items, according to reports.

"Jiang will travel with BP China's top executives to London to further co-operations and make friends," a Beijing-based industry executive who is close to BP told Reuters.

"Rumaila will be on the agenda," the official said, referring to the giant Iraqi oilfield for which a consortium comprising BP and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has won a service contract.

[Medvedev in Central Asia to bolster Russian clout](#)

SANGTUDA, Tajikistan (AFP) – President Dmitry Medvedev Friday opened a major Russian-owned hydroelectric plant in Tajikistan and was to attend a regional summit as Moscow seeks to firm its influence in the region.

Medvedev inaugurated the 720-million dollar Sangtudinskaya plant in southern Tajikistan alongside Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon, a facility that aims to ease the Central Asian country's chronic energy problems.

[10 Top Oil and Natural Gas Exporting Countries](#)

While most people know that the Middle East holds most of the world's oil reserves, not many of us know what countries exactly export the most of the oil produced. The same applies to natural gas as well. So I did some research to find out the answers.

[Top companies by market capitalisation](#)

Seven of the 12 most valuable companies are either banks or oil producers.

[Petrobras May Borrow \\$5 Billion From U.S. Ex-Im Bank](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA said it may more than double its borrowings from the U.S. Export-Import Bank to as much as \$5 billion, following a \$10 billion loan from China.

Petrobras, as the state-controlled oil company is known, may increase the loans from \$2 billion now, Chief Financial Officer Almir Barbassa said today at a press conference in Rio de Janeiro. The initial loan made in April was an "opening amount," Fred Hochberg, president of the U.S. bank, said earlier today in an interview in Rio.

[Shell axes thousands of white-collar jobs](#)

Royal Dutch Shell accelerated its cost-cutting campaign yesterday, warning of further substantial job reductions as the oil giant feels the effects of the biggest slump in global demand for crude since 1980.

As Shell announced a 70 per cent fall in profits to \$2.3 billion (£1.4 billion) during the second quarter, Peter Voser, the new chief executive, confirmed that 20 per cent of its senior management, about 140 people, had already been axed since his appointment on July 1.

But he signalled there would be thousands more job losses as a reorganisation, dubbed Transition 2009, intensified. This, he added, would be complete by the end of the year.

[Mexico cuts 2009 oil output goal by 100,000 bpd](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's state oil monopoly Pemex said on Thursday it cut its 2009 output goal to 2.65 million barrels per day, underscoring its struggle to replace capacity lost at the aging Cantarell field.

Pemex had previously said output would end the year around 2.75 million bpd but the slide in yields at Cantarell, once one of the world's most prolific oil fields, and delays in starting up new wells at its unconventional Chicontepec project rendered this goal unattainable.

[Pemex Output Goal 'Uphill Battle,' Forcing It to Borrow More](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos, Latin America's largest oil company, is likely to miss its 2009 output goal even after lowering its production forecast, forcing the company to seek other sources of financing to pay for its largest-ever capital spending plan.

Pemex, which hasn't increased production in 3 years, needs to raise output by at least 1.6 percent in the final six months of 2009 to reach a goal of 2.65 million barrels a day, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Mexico City-based Pemex lowered its forecast yesterday on an earnings conference call.

Last year, Pemex's output fell at the fastest rate since World War II, costing it more than \$20 billion in potential sales amid record crude prices. Pemex cut its forecast three times last year as its then-largest field, Cantarell, dropped more than twice as fast as government predictions.

"It is an uphill battle to surpass the natural decline in Cantarell," Gianna Bern, president of Brookshire Advisory and Research Inc., said in an interview yesterday from Flossmoor, Illinois. "Given bureaucratic delays, it could impede efforts to increase production. It is not very likely."

[Gazprom Starts Building Pacific Link, May Hurt Exxon](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom, Russia's state-owned natural-gas exporter, started building a pipeline in the Pacific Ocean that may damage Exxon Mobil Corp.'s plans to export the fuel to China.

Workers welded the first joint on the initial 1,350 kilometers (840 miles) of the pipeline at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Gazprom Deputy Chief Executive Officer Alexander Ananikov. The pipeline will link Sakhalin Island with the mainland city of Vladivostok.

[Buffett Posts \\$1 Billion Profit on China Hybrid Carmaker BYD](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. earned a \$1 billion paper profit from an investment it agreed to make in Chinese carmaker BYD Co. less than a year ago.

The automaker has jumped fivefold in Hong Kong trading since the deal was announced on Sept. 27, helped by Buffett's investment and rising demand for fuel-efficient vehicles. Three days earlier Berkshire agreed to an investment in Goldman Sachs Group Inc. that has since generated a paper profit of about \$2 billion.

[Ohio budget tries to boost solar power](#)

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio's latest budget seeks to put solar power in the financial reach of Ohio residents by addressing the cost of installation, the biggest barrier to the renewable energy technology's large-scale deployment.

Now the onus falls on cities and townships across the state to carry the vision forward.

[Low Prices Melt Profit For Solar](#)

Falling solar prices are pinching most solar firms now, but could end up spurring more use of solar power in the near future.

Prices for crystalline-silicon solar panels, or modules -- the most common type of solar panel -- have plunged on the heels of a drop in prices of the main material used to make them, polysilicon. Both declines stem from a solar module supply glut tied to the financial crisis, which quashed project financing, and a harsh winter in Europe, which hampered installations.

[Bulgaria May Scrap Nuclear-Plant Project, Sell Shares](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Bulgaria may cancel construction of a 4 billion-euro (\$5.5 billion) nuclear power station and sell shares in its state-run energy utilities to plug a widening deficit, according to Deputy Prime Minister Simeon Djankov.

[Libya and Canada sign nuclear deal](#)

TRIPOLI (AFP) – Libya and Canada have signed a memorandum of intent on nuclear power, the fourth signed by Tripoli in the past two years, an official said on Thursday.

The memorandum foresees cooperation between the two countries in research and the mining, processing and transport of uranium, as well as its use in medicine and desalination projects.

Since July 2007, Libya has signed another three similar agreements with France, Russia and Ukraine.

[Should Thursday Be the New Friday? The Environmental and Economic Pluses of the 4-Day Workweek](#)

As government agencies and corporations scramble to cut expenses, one idea gaining widespread attention involves cutting something most employees wouldn't mind losing: work on Fridays. Regular three-day weekends, without a decrease in the actual hours worked per week, could not only save money, but also ease pressures on the environment and public health, advocates say. In fact, several states, cities and companies across the country are considering, or have already implemented on a trial basis, the condensed schedule for their employees.

[Gaia Wizard Sets Doomsday Time Bomb](#)

What's scarier than severe recession? Okay, depression. Terrorism looms still, but for sheer panic, nothing matches 90% species die-off. Not from asteroids, nor nukes, nor is our planet doomed, though the approaching Andromeda galaxy looks to digest our Milky Way – but not for billions of years. Let's worry instead about our progeny and how they sustain humanity if James Lovelock is right. He foresees shrunken habitat, resource wars, scorched landscapes, and gruesome casualties.

[The Omnivore's Delusion: Against the Agri-intellectuals](#)

As much as Pollan might desire it, even President Obama cannot reshuffle the chemical deck that nature has dealt. Energy may well get much more expensive, and peak oil production may have been reached. But food production will have a claim on fossil fuels long after we have learned how to use renewables and nuclear power to handle many of our other energy needs.

[Too many clunkers, too little cash](#)

Congressional sources said early Thursday evening that the program would be put on hold. But Obama administration officials said later that Clunkers had not been suspended and that they were studying the situation.

[Activists cheer China's plan to move refinery](#)

HONG KONG (Reuters) - China's decision to shift the location of a planned \$5 billion oil refinery and petrochemical plant in the south after years of public outcry is a sign that environmental concerns can shape policy.

[China accepts 1st environment lawsuit against govt](#)

BEIJING – A court in southwest China has accepted the country's first lawsuit filed by an environmental group against a local government, a member of the group said Friday.

The All-China Environmental Federation, a group backed by the government, filed the suit on behalf of residents against the local land resources bureau in Qingzhen city in Guizhou province, which sold land to a drink and ice cream processing plant they allege is a threat to a scenic lake area.

[1,000 protest over China chemical plant pollution: residents](#)

BEIJING (AFP) – More than 1,000 people protested for a second day in central China on Thursday over pollution from a chemical plant that they say has sickened locals and poisoned surrounding farmlands, residents said.

Residents of the town of Zhentou in Hunan province demonstrated outside local government headquarters and a police station, demanding greater compensation for pollution from the Xianhe Chemical Plant, protesters said.

[Alcoa Razes Rain Forest in Court Case Led by Brazil Prosecutors](#)

For Bentes and thousands of others in the Juruti region of Para whose livelihood depends on wildlife and plants, everything changed in 2006. That's when New York-based Alcoa Inc., the world's second-largest primary aluminum producer, started to bulldoze a 56-kilometer (35-mile) swath of the rain forest across hundreds of families' properties to build a railway.

This cleared corridor, 100 meters (109 yards) wide, will lead to a mine that will chew up 10,500 hectares (25,900 acres) of virgin jungle over three decades.

More than half of the mine will lie inside a forest that by Brazilian federal law is supposed to be preserved unharmed forever for local residents. By year's end, Alcoa says, the railway will transport 7,000 tons a day of bauxite, the dark red ore that's used to make aluminum, from the mine to a port on the Amazon River.

[Stumbling Over Data: Mistakes Fuel Climate-Warming Skeptics: Do minor errors erode public](#)

Many scientific organizations, such as the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, now put data (some near real-time) on their Web sites. The information ranges from raw numbers from weather stations to computed values of, for instance, monthly global temperature anomalies, which represent temperature deviations from a historical average. Typically researchers make corrections and adjustments as they check equipment and replicate experiments.

In today's politically charged environment, though, these routine corrections have become ammunition in the warming war.

[Alberta set to benefit from finite cap on greenhouse gases](#)

If Canada imposes a finite cap on greenhouse gas emissions under a cap and trade scheme, as it's expected to, industrial sectors across the country would have to share the quota in a way that accommodates the disproportionately polluting tar sands.

[The folly of 'magical solutions' for targeting carbon emissions](#)

Setting unattainable emissions targets such as in the UK is not a policy — it's an act of wishful thinking, argues one political scientist.

[Does divorce cause global warming?](#)

But in Britain, where the birth-rate is below replacement level and the majority family will soon involve an only-child, the environmental gains of declining fertility are more than offset by the fashion for solitary living. Per capita, a family of five uses far fewer resources than a bachelor living alone. It is obviously politically difficult for Dr Porritt to point the finger at the massive decline in cohabitation when issuing his clarion call on behalf of the planet. But the bitter truth is that rising levels of divorce might have a stronger connection with rising sea levels than the three-child family which Dr Porritt wants to outlaw.

[Some Little States With Big Emissions Could See Allowance Windfall](#)

Small states with potent carbon dioxide emissions could win big under House climate legislation, according to a new analysis that shows residents of power-pumping states collecting a large number of free pollution permits to soften the rising cost of energy.

[Carbon Capture Needs Decade of Subsidy, Harvard Researcher Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Technology to remove and bury carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants will require at least a decade of government subsidies before becoming economically viable, a Harvard University researcher said.

Start-up costs for carbon-capture and storage, known as CCS, are high enough to “need some kind of subsidies” for 10 or 20 years before the technology can compete with other forms of low-carbon power generation, Mohammed Al-Juaied, a visiting scholar at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, said in a phone interview from Boston.



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