



What, me worry about the environment?

By David Wick, July 1, 2019

I was recently hit with a triple whammy.

First came an email saying that June is "Be SmokeWise" month. Then I saw an Ashland Tidings headline, "Republican senators remain AWOL." Then on JPR, I heard a program on "Environmental Grief."

I am aware that the environment is changing and that we all are supposed to have a part in making it less severe. And at times I comfort myself by thinking that I am happy someone else is taking care of the heavy lifting to mitigate the continuing bad news.

Wham, additional local headlines underscore how serious this is, "Climate change calls for new look at fire" and "Climate change could alter vineyard practices."

This is so close, yet so far. It is literally the very air I breathe that keeps me alive, but it is someone else's island that will disappear beneath the rising sea. It is helpful for me to remember that this is a critical local and global issue and that the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission was born as a local and global initiative.

ACPC's early mission statement is, "A community-wide movement dedicated to transforming our attitudes, behaviors and institutions into ones that foster harmonious relationships with each other and the natural world." This is all about mindset and behavior.

Fostering a harmonious relationship with the natural world, how best can I do that? I find it helpful to look at both the global and local levels to keep perspective on what is being done to mitigate environmental change and what inspires me to take action. I therefore highlight a number of actions that stand out as inspirational, educational and are "roll up our sleeves" action-based.

- **On Sept. 21, 2019, United Nations International Day of Peace, the theme is “Climate Action for Peace” (internationaldayofpeace.org).**

“Climate Action for Peace” brings a clear message: “The global climate emergency is a threat to security and stability. As coastal areas and degraded inland areas are becoming uninhabitable, millions of people are being forced to seek safety and better lives elsewhere. With extreme weather events and disasters becoming more frequent and severe, disputes over dwindling resources risk fueling climate-related conflict,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. This day will engage hundreds of millions of people around the world.

- **United Nations’ ActNow Climate Campaign.** ActNow.bot is a fully interactive and responsive chat bot, located on the UN’s Facebook page, which suggests everyday actions — determined by the user’s interaction with the bot — that can be taken to preserve the environment and logged on the platform to be shared with social media followers to persuade them to take action too. The collective actions will be presented during the United Nations Secretary-General’s Climate Summit in New York in September.

Locally we are very fortunate to have several excellent organizations that work on a range of levels, from policy impact to community and personal action. They include:

- **Geos Institute (geosinstitute.org)** — Programs: Climatewise, Forest Legacies, Working Waters and Climate Ready Communities. “The window of opportunity to make a significant impact in this global crisis is small and we recognize the urgency with which we need to act.”
- **Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (socan.eco)** — A broad range, from policy, community and personal actions. SOCAN is a grassroots, volunteer, nonprofit organization of area residents who care about climate change and have joined forces to take bold action against it. Through volunteer projects, they focus on reducing the impacts of global warming across Southern Oregon.
- **Rogue Climate (rogueclimate.org)** — As Oregonians of all political persuasions, they call on corporate executives and national, state and local public officials to take prompt action to speed up the transition to cleaner energy and greater energy efficiency, and protect us all from the impacts of climate change.
- **Southern Oregon Pachamama Alliance (southernoregonpachamama.org)** — Programs: Awakening the Dreamer, Reversing Climate Change, Game Changer Intensive. “Bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet.”

- **Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan** – “The city of Ashland has a responsibility to address climate change risks by reducing emissions and preparing the city for unavoidable impacts.”

Don't just worry, take action.

David Wick is executive director of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission.