

A Mandate for Eco-Responsibility is Our New Era of Opportunity
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In the beginning, Earth was Eden. Who would argue that we've messed up paradise? Civilizations come and go on Earth, and we're driving toward a crashing demise more rapidly and with more precision than any other civilization known to be lost on this planet. We think we're the most intelligent species and more highly evolved than any of our predecessors, yet we can see that our brilliance is hurtling us ever faster toward our end. The writing is on the wall, just like the scrawled drawings we find inside caves that help us chart the past. Rome wasn't lost in a day. And neither shall we be.

Why do [investors continue to promote mining](#) operations when we know that [miners suffer fatal illnesses](#) from exposure to asbestos and coal dust? Why do we support digging and drilling underground when such operations ultimately lead to [destruction of the infrastructure and water supplies](#) that are the foundation of our lives? Why do we support [huge agricultural and cattle operations](#) for our food supplies when both pose nearly insurmountable challenges to our environmental health? Why do we allow companies to produce products that leach poisonous chemicals into our land, air and water, then pay hospitals and doctors untold amounts of money to carry us to deaths crippled by chemicals? Why do we expect our [government to clean up the toxic messes](#) left all over the planet by industry? The answer to all of these questions is [money](#). Which poses yet another question – why do we support an [economy that ultimately rips off the majority of its investors](#) and the workers who toil for increasingly less rewards to support it? All of these questions elucidate the paradigm of sustainability. They represent the issues we must resolve if we want to achieve a civilization that will continue for our children and grandchildren.

Our planet is resilient, and she is already responding to the threats we are imposing upon her. If we don't deal with these issues – which are larger than changing light bulbs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in 20 or 30 years – we will lose the battle we're facing. While economists are in angst over unemployment, workers are discovering that their time has value at home, in the garden and with their children, that far surpasses the benefits of the shrinking paychecks they once received. Lower paychecks are resulting in less fuel usage, which is bringing us lowered greenhouse gasses. Diminished trade is also benefiting us with decreased fuel usage and emissions, even as economists wail about fewer profits.

An important point to keep at the forefront is that those who seem to control us because they have the money are a tiny minority of our planet's population – 34 percent of the wealth in the world is controlled by just one percent of the population. And while the money they hold does have some power over the rest of us, the numbers we represent has far more power over them.

Through my work, I see news daily that does not make its way into the public purview. It's difficult to appreciate the need for change if we don't understand the problems, and it can be stultifying information when we are unaware of the efforts being made worldwide to address the issues. As an environmental journalist and author, it's my responsibility to educate the public about our environmental condition, as well as about sustainable solutions to our predicament.

So I started aggregating environmental news at www.GoGreenNation.org to help raise awareness and to help connect those who are working to alleviate the ills we face. To introduce this site to my local community, I started a local chapter of Green Drinks International, where anyone interested in sustainability can meet to chat it up over a drink once a month. The group was wildly successful in our progressive little town of Gainesville, Florida. At a green drinks meeting, we founded Gainesville's Environmental Film Festival – a way to bring essential information to town that was otherwise passing us by. Our first festival was held last spring – a resounding success with more than 3,000 attending from far and wide over the ten-day event which featured 12 films, an eco-fair, eco-tours and eco art. I want to help the world learn how to get back to living in harmony with the Earth.

I've now incorporated the festival as a non-profit, and I have a team working to make it a remarkable annual event. With 25 films and accompanying workshops, arts events engaging students and the public,

an all-day eco-fair featuring sustainable products, businesses and organizations plus music, art and a free family film, we seek to generate some serious community conversations.

Understanding what we're facing is the biggest hurdle in dealing with our problems. Cinema Verde seeks to shine a light on these issues and to mobilize local communities to reorganize our world and lives into sustainable systems that can carry us into the future with greater opportunities for health, happiness and well being. And we're already more than halfway there.

The Cinema Verde Environmental Film Festival and Go Green Nation were Founded by Trish Riley, an award winning investigative reporter who has specialized in environmental journalism for 17 years. She currently serves as Director of the Cinema Verde Environmental Film & Arts Festival.