



CARIBBEAN CURRENTS

Volume 5, Number 4
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Welcome..

...to **CARIBBEAN CURRENTS**, Volume Five, Number Four. This newsletter is edited by INFOTERRA/USA in its capacity as the Regional Service Centre (RSC) for INFOTERRA National Focal Points (NFPs) in the English and French-speaking Caribbean. Although the *CURRENTS* is assembled at INFOTERRA/USA, the content belongs to you, the readers. You are encouraged to send in any questions, comments, problems, or interesting issues relevant to the Region for inclusion in the *CURRENTS*. Please see the Guidelines for Contributions on page 4 for more information.

Each issue will feature a Directory of NFPs in the Region so that anyone with international environmental questions can contact their nearest resource. Please feel free to contact one another as well as your RSC for assistance or materials.

Please don't hesitate to share *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS* with your friends and colleagues, and to make copies as needed. The Currents should serve as an informational forum for anyone who lives, works, or is involved in environmental issues in the English and French-speaking Caribbean Region.

EMERGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

This issue's topic is emerging global environmental issues. The U.S EPA has recently issued a report on major environmental threats to the world's ecosystems. These threats include climate change, ozone depletion, long range transport of toxic substances, loss of biodiversity and ocean degradation.

The next issue of **CARIBBEAN CURRENTS** will look at the Year of the Ocean. The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1998 as the **International Year of the Ocean**. Oceans play an integral role in shaping life on earth. Coastal and marine waters provide millions of jobs, generate billions of dollars in goods and services, and are a source of food and recreation to people all over the world.

If you have any comments on this topic, or would like to contribute a short article or have a resources guide to share, please submit your contribution following the guidelines on page 4. Please feel free to fax, write to, or call the RSC with any questions or comments you have. Share information you have and we will include it in the next or a future issue of *CURRENTS*. Thank you for your assistance.

Emerging Global Environmental Issues
By Donald A. Brown
E.P.A., Office of International Activities

Emerging Global Environmental Issues is the first in a series of reports on international environmental developments to be published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This first report identifies and describes certain emerging threats to global ecosystems.

The report states that for the first time in history, human actions are threatening global ecosystems. In light of these global environmental threats, nations can no longer assume that environmental quality goals can be achieved through individual national action alone. The amount of coal and oil burning in one country may affect temperatures in many others; the use of certain pesticides in one part of the world can affect the quality of life in other places of the globe.

Among the more important environmental problems facing the global community today are: climate change, depletion of stratospheric ozone, the world-wide spread of persistent organic pollutants, loss of biodiversity, and ocean degradation. The report describes these problems in some detail as well as their causes and international responses.

The report explains why global environmental problems should be of notable concern to Americans. First, these problems create direct and significant threats to human health and the ecosystems in the United States.

Second, U.S. actions may adversely impact other parts of the world. To the extent that U.S.-based activities are contributing to global and regional environmental problems, Americans may need to modify their behavior.

Third, degradation of the world's resources is rapidly becoming a matter of strategic national interest, as competition for access to scarce and diminishing resources has induced nations to go to war, destabilizes governments, or creates international refugees.

Fourth, global environmental problems have the potential to diminish the quality of life of our children. To the extent that the world's resources are being degraded by present activities, current generations may be failing to fulfill their responsibilities to future generations.

After a detailed discussion of the problems of climate change, stratospheric ozone, loss of biodiversity, long-range transport of toxic substances, and ocean degradation, the report concludes with a short discussion of other emerging global environmental problems. These include deforestation, the transformation of arable land into deserts, degradation of drinking water supplies, inadequate sewage treatment, and mismanagement of hazardous and nuclear wastes. These problems are not covered in detail in this report, since their impacts are mostly local or regional, rather than global. However, they are no less important and in fact create the highest immediate risk to people worldwide.



INTERNET SITES ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

A few of many sources of electronic information on global environmental issues.

EPA Global Warming Website

<http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Includes links to latest developments, impacts of global warming and links to other global warming sites.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNEP)

<http://www.ipcc.ch/uright.html>

Features links to technical reports, press releases and the panel's newsletter, as well as other links of interest.

EPA Stratospheric Ozone Homepage

<http://www.epa.gov/ozone>

This site contains information on the science of ozone depletion, U.S. regulations, the UV index, and links to information on the Montreal Protocol, UNEP, and other international policy information.

UNEP Information Clearing House on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

<http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/welcome.html>

This site features a selected bibliography, information on specific pops and their alternatives, as well as links to case studies, POP meetings, news, other web links.

Convention on Biodiversity Homepage

<http://www.biodiv.org>

This site features information on the Convention, links to press releases and quarterly reports from the Secretariat of the Convention, a "themes and issues" link, and a clearing house with access to reports, other websites and information on other biodiversity-related conventions.

World Resources Institute Biodiversity Homepage

<http://www.wri.org/biodiv>

This homepage features information on many different aspects of biodiversity, such as marine ecosystems, bioregional management and a global biodiversity strategy. There are also links to publications and other biodiversity sites.

EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds Homepage

<http://www.epa.gov/owow>

The EPA site features a variety of information on oceans, coasts, watersheds and wetlands. There are links to ocean and coastal regulatory programs, publications and coastal activities.

Marine Pollution Studies Laboratory (California State University)

<http://color/mlml.calstate.edu/www/groups/mpsl/mpsl.htm>

The site features links to current projects undertaken by the laboratory, as well as a library with links to publications and a reference database.

Conferences on Emerging Global Environmental Issues



November 17-18, 1997 -- *Kyoto and Beyond: Climate Change Policy Moves to Center Stage*, Washington, D.C. Contact the Center for Environmental Information, Inc., 55 St. Paul Street, Rochester, NY 14604, Telephone (716) 262-2870, Fax: (716) 262-4156. .

January 7-10, 1998 -- *Symposium on Biodiversity and Biotechnology*, Caracas, Venezuela. Contact Keith Wilson, Office of Continuing Professional Education, Cook College, Rutgers University, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0231, Telephone: (732) 932-9271, FAX: (732) 932-1187, Email: ocpe@aesop.rutgers.edu, Internet: http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mmeton/Monroe_Wall.html.

March 3-5, 1998 -- *Second International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar*, Lillehammer, Norway. Contact May Kristen Ditlevsen, Seminar Secretariat, Telephone (47) 73-59-12-12, FAX: (47) 73-59-70-51, E-Mail: may.ditlevsen@chem.sintef.no.

NEW MULTILINGUAL THESAURUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS NOW AVAILABLE

The new Envoc/INFOTERRA Multilingual Thesaurus of Environmental Terms is now available. It has been revised to reflect emerging environmental concerns and new technologies. The thesaurus is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. For more information, contact:

SMI (Distribution Services) Limited
P.O. Box 119
Stevenage
Hertfordshire SG1 4TP, UNITED KINGDOM
FAX: (44 1234) 782878
E-Mail: Anthony@smibooks.com

Guidelines for Contributions to *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS*

Any organization or individual operating or involved in the English and French-speaking Caribbean Region is welcome to contribute to the newsletter. Contributions should be addressed to:

Caribbean Currents Coordinator
INFOTERRA/USA
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Headquarters Library, 3404
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460
UNITED STATES

Telephone: (202) 260-5917; Fax: (202) 260-3923; E-mail: library-infoterra@epamail.epa.gov

Please note that submissions should meet the following criteria:

- They should be relevant to environmental issues
- They must be of interest to or directly involve the Region
- They must not endorse or recommend any product or commercial service, explicitly or implicitly
- They must be brief--under 250 words; Bulletin Board requests should be under 100 words
- They must be received by the posted deadline (see below)

Please feel free to contact the *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS* coordinator if you are interested in submitting a longer article. You should contact the coordinator to discuss your topic and any size or content restrictions beforehand. Be aware that once your article is submitted, it is subject to editing as needed. Final decisions on editing and inclusion of any contributions are left to the INFOTERRA/USA Manager. Please contact INFOTERRA/USA using the address above to contribute any comments, questions, problems, or ideas.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO Vol. 6, No. 1: December 8, 1997

Welcome to The *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS*

Bulletin Board

Each issue, we will publish questions or concerns of interest to CURRENTS readers. Anyone who has materials or information that they are seeking or that they feel will be helpful should feel free to contribute. We will post queries and offerings of general interest on the Bulletin Board. You may respond by contacting the reader who has placed the item, or the RSC.

Bulletin Board



DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

INFOTERRA/USA has free copies of the following publications available.

If you would like copies of any of these documents, please let us know.

- EPA Office of Wastewater Management Publications Catalog July 1997 (*new edition*)
- Emerging Global Environmental Issues (U.S. EPA, Office of International Activities), January 1997, (EPA160-K-97-001)
- A Commitment to Address the Environmental and Development Problems of the Wider Caribbean (Brochure)

To request copies of these documents, just write to INFOTERRA/USA using the

contact information on page 6.



Information Needed on Oceans/Coastal Waters

The next issue of *Caribbean Currents* will focus on the International Year of the Ocean. We would be interested in receiving any information on projects or studies related to this issue (such as management of coastal and ocean space, marine environmental quality and protection, or public awareness efforts).

These materials will also be kept on file for the benefit of researchers and visitors to INFOTERRA.

Please contact INFOTERRA/USA using the information on page 6 if you can provide any assistance. Thank you for your support!

Send your Bulletins to the RSC for publication in the next issue. See the Guidelines on page 4 for information on submitting items.

About the NFP Directory

This directory reflects changes and additions to the INFOTERRA Directory of National Focal Points distributed by INFOTERRA/PAC, dated January 1997. Please check this information to verify that it is correct and up-to-date. If you have any changes or corrections, please notify the RSC as soon as possible. We will be happy to relay the information to the PAC.

NFP DIRECTORY

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