

March 2023 Volume 7 Issue 9

Mobilizing Rotary for Sustainable Living

Our planet's capacity to sustain human life is in dire danger. That's a fact, and so is this: every Rotarian has the power to increase humanity's ability to survive. Actions you take - from your kitchen to international summits – can help humankind return to sustainable living. ESRAG's articles this month show Rotarians doing exactly that: combining who they are, where they serve, and who they know to help their communities live sustainably.

We start this month's Sustainable Living stories by linking you to talks by business sustainability consultant and ESRAG Director Gunilla Östberg on Planetary Boundaries analysis. Insights from climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe explain how to overcome panic with hope - the theme for the upcoming Rotary year - by showing your community effective actions they can take. Next, accompany Rotarians who are mobilizing their values, knowledge, and networks to promote sustainable living around the world:



- Jaideep Malaviya charts Rotary's road to revive rural India by helping farmers afford solar water pumps.
- Jeff Smith reports how Rotarians are boosting green jobs to revitalize upstate New York.
- Canadian Joey Smith shares how to woo the wary, to make giant sports events sustainable.
- I report on how a regional faith community shared its resources to increase energy efficiency.
- Discover sustainable packaging innovations in the March 29 Pack with Care webinar hosted by British Rotarian Jane Penson.

We'll link you to tools for choosing high-impact sustainability projects: Drawdown Solutions, the EnROADS Climate Solutions Simulator, and the Global Footprint datasets, as well as an overview of emerging carbon markets by ESRAG Director Joey O'Brien. Finally, ESRAG Chair Pat Armstrong provides exciting updates on environmental events at the upcoming Rotary International Convention in

Melbourne, and Karen McDaniels shares great advice on how to engage new Rotary leaders if you get the opportunity to represent ESRAG at your district's PETS training conference.

Graphic: [Sign up](#) for ESRAG's upcoming 15-Day Plant-Rich Diet workshop to discover one of the most powerful ways you and your community can help humanity live within our planetary means. Plant-Rich Diet is a top climate solution.

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Sharing Truth, Hope, and Confidence

By Ariel Miller, ESRAG Newsletter Editor



ESRAG Directors Gunilla Ostberg and Dr. Ludwig Kalthoff were invited to speak at the 2022 Rotary International Presidential Conference in Venice on how economies can rebuild better after the pandemic by tackling the “spiralling environmental crisis that needs to be addressed to ensure the survival of our communities” (a quote from the [conference theme](#)). Conference speakers included 2021-22 RI President Shekhar Mehta, European Parliament President Dr. Roberta Metsola, business leaders, RI Directors and key Rotary and United Nations staff.

An engineer with 30 years’ experience helping communities create growth and profitability based on sustainability, Gunilla gave a [17-minute talk](#) on why Rotarians are concerned about the environmental crisis that threatens all our other humanitarian goals. She listed

nine planetary capacities, at least six of which we’ve already exceeded. Her [30-minute talk](#) for ESRAG’s Projects + webinar offers more detail. Both are compelling calls to action you can share with your club or community.

Climate scientist Dr. Katharine Hayhoe urges us to empower people by showing them win-win solutions to make the world safer for those they love. Emphasizing what people need to give up triggers solution aversion, she warns: “We think the cure is worse than the disease.” The chapter “Why We Fear Solutions” in Hayhoe’s book *Saving Us* shares memorable stories of how triggering guilt shuts people down. Instead, encourage the people you know by recognizing and celebrating their ethics, and pointing out how they can protect people and communities they treasure by taking action.

Hayhoe points out that people’s values are a core part of who they are, and recommends that we start by listening, to learn about the moral perspectives of the people with whom we’re sharing our environmental concerns. At the start of *Saving Us* (p. 14) Hayhoe describes how reading the Four Way Test on a West Texas Rotary Club’s banner lifted her heart as she prepared to speak to them about climate change.

Photo: Swedish sustainability consultant and Rotarian Gunilla Östberg

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AgriVoltaics: Revolutionary Climate Solution for Indian Farmers

By Jaideep Malaviya, ESRAG South Asia Lead for Renewable Energy

The agriculture sector employs about half of India's population, providing the primary source of livelihood for close to 60% of our people. India holds the record for the second-largest area of agricultural land of any nation in the world. Farming here primarily relies on ground-fed water, with external energy needed to operate pumps. At present, over 30 million agricultural pumps are installed in India, nearly 8 million of them diesel-powered. The total annual diesel consumption of these pumps works out to 5.52 billion litres, with associated emissions of 15.4 million tonnes of CO₂. A quarter to a half million pump sets are added annually.



The Indian Government has launched an ambitious program of solarising agricultural pump sets. The goal is to place 3.5 million pumps with 10,000 MC grid-connected solar-powered feeder plants. The plan includes generous government subsidies, and banks are willing to lend to farmers, but the need to come up with a down payment is still a hurdle for many. Rotarians have a revolutionary opportunity to advance climate solutions and economic development by helping farmers close the gap.

Photo credit: Jaideep N. Malaviya, Rotary District 3131

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EarthX Video Contest Deadline MARCH 20!



This news just in to your communications team: you can submit a 3-minute video about your environmental project by March 20 [through this link](#) for the chance to be included in EarthX's 2023 film or shown at the Rotary Pavilion at the [EarthX](#) Earth Day environmental convention April 21-23 in Dallas, Texas!

Thanks to Rtn. Nagiyoti Bollapragada of ESRAG's Project Team for sending us the information. Rotarians are participating through the Rotary Climate Action Team, Rotary Reefs, and ESRAG.

Catalyzing Green Jobs

By PDG Jeff Smith, D7170 Environmental Sustainability Chair

Rotary's Seventh Area of Focus is an enormous undertaking. According to Bill Gates, in his recent book *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*, the transition to net zero carbon emissions will be the greatest challenge the world has ever faced. To make meaningful progress,

GREATER BINGHAMTON CLEAN ENERGY CAREERS SUMMIT

Rotary will collaborate within and beyond Rotary for knowledge, impact and funding.

The Upstate New York region served by D7170 and other districts was once a center of technology development. Now, the focus on clean energy technology, chip manufacturing, and nanotechnology opens the potential for vast development that can help build organizations like Rotary. To get there, we need to develop the workforce and address our level of poverty.

Rotary District 7170's environmental sustainability strategy also embraces economic development, community well-being, partnerships, funding, increased membership, and a sense of urgency.

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**Together, we can
create robust clean
energy career
pathways**

This program will be focused on clean energy activities and needs in the region through:

- Inspiring keynote speakers
- Breakout discussions
- Job fair
- Networking reception



Pack With Care! March 29, 7:30 pm (UTC+0)

Catch consultant Fiona Thompson's update
on trends in sustainable packaging!



Join Speak up for Our Planet's online discussion with Fiona Thompson, senior sustainability expert with the environmental and engineering consultancy [Ricardo](#). Fiona will update you on trends in making packaging more sustainable, sharing examples from the beauty, food, and drink sector. She'll discuss the importance of Life Cycle Assessment in deciding how to change packaging materials and formats, and provide an overview of packaging and labelling regulations going into effect in the UK and Europe under Extended Producer

Responsibility (EPR). You can join the live talk directly from [this link](#). The program is an hour long including discussion. It will be recorded, then uploaded to YouTube, where you can find it within a few days using the "Join Now" button at the link above.

[Speak up for our Planet](#) was founded by Rotarian Jane Penson, MA, MBA to host free online talks "to inspire individuals to take action and collaborate to combat the seemingly ever-growing list of challenges that we face in order to protect our planet." Jane, who lives in Chalfont St. Giles, UK, belongs to the e-Club of Innovation. "Our members are from all over the world," she says, "the current president in Canada, the president-elect, a Canadian Lebanese who lives in Australia, and so on!"

Join Top Rotary Leaders at RAGTime May 25

By Dr Pat Armstrong, ESRAG Chair

Following the inaugural and successful RAGTime in RICON 2022 in Houston, Texas, the DNA RAG is organising a second RAGTime in Melbourne on Thursday, 25 May in the Jardin Tan room at the glorious Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens. [Register here](#) for this unique opportunity, over canapés, to greet members of ESRAG and to meet, learn from and share ideas for joint projects with members of the other 26 Rotary Action Groups. You will also be able to have informal conversations with Rotary staff and our Rotary International leaders. So far we have registrations from many past and future RI Presidents and their staff. If you are planning to arrive early to RICON, this is an event that you will not want to miss.

RAGTime
Celebrate the Impact of
Rotary Action Groups
Pre-RICON

25 May 2023, Thursday
19.00 - 21.00
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne/Jardin Tan

\$60 Rotarians
US\$30 Rotaractors

*Canapés + one free drink provided
Cash bar available

Registration QR code

Mix, Learn and Collaborate with members from Rotary Action Groups and Rotary leadership

Rotary

Sustainable Sports: How Banff Marathon Achieved Zero Waste

By Joey O'Brien, ESRAG Director



The Banff Marathon was Canada's first signatory to the United Nations sectorial call for partnerships under "sport for climate action." We hit 100% waste diversion in 2018. This is for an event with about 10,000 people over three days in three venues. It takes a number of years to refine the processes to attain this level. [This link](#) describes the sustainability features of the Marathon, including waste diversion, procurement, green energy, raising participants' awareness, mitigating impacts on the park environment and wildlife, and responsible transportation.

We created this model with the 2014 Alberta Winter Games. I was blessed with my daughter Stephanie's being the race director for the first few years, and

she let me run amok to affect all aspects of the Games. One of the early committee members commented, "you aren't going to make me do something I don't want to." At the end of the event, she was showing me the choices she made through a sustainability lens. Now, the whole team simply does

what they did last year, which is wonderful.

For the longest time the Alberta Winter Games could claim to be the world's most sustainable multisport games.

Photo: Joey O'Brien demonstrating the public interface of Zero-Waste at the Banff Marathon.

[Read More](#)

ESRAG Events Showcase Sustainability in Melbourne

By Dr. Pat Armstrong, ESRAG Chair

If you are attending the Rotary International Convention (RICON) 2023 in Melbourne, Australia, 27-31 May, don't miss the many environmental activities taking place in the week prior to the Convention and during the convention itself. You can follow all the events on the [ESRAG RICON website](#).

The pre-RICON events include:

- RAGTime - celebrate the impact of Rotary Action Groups and meet with Rotary International Leaders, including a number of past and future RI Presidents (Thursday 25 May, 7 pm to 9 pm AEDT). [Register here](#).
- ESRAG Environment Actions Summit - great environmental speakers and workshops (Thursday 25 May, 12 noon to 5 pm AEDT) [Sign up here](#).
- Pre-RICON tours - visit environmental projects around Melbourne. To learn about these tours and to register visit the [ESRAG at RICON website](#).



[ESRAG at RICON](#) gives you all the details on environmental events during the Rotary International Convention:

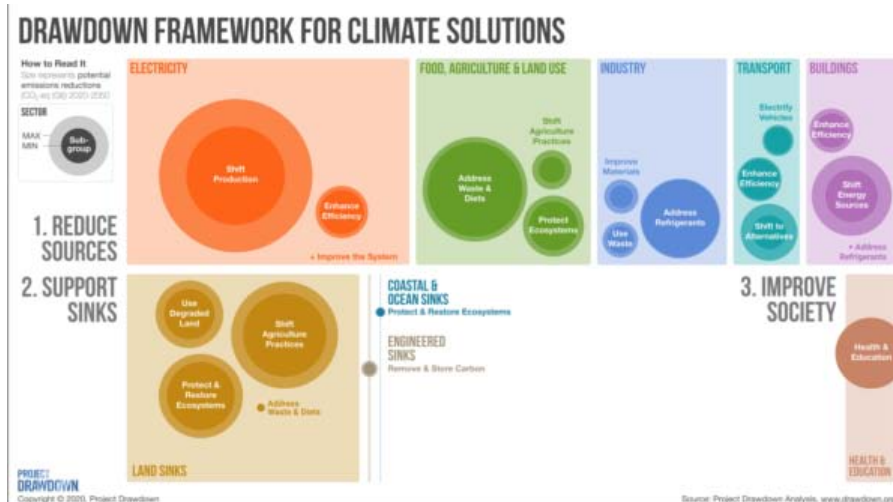
- RICON Breakout Sessions – support our ESRAG presenters on rivers, plastics, plant rich diets (check out the dates on the RICON website)
- RICON ESRAG House of Friendship Booth – we need volunteers! [Sign up](#) to promote Rotary's environmental area of focus and ESRAG.
- ESRAG Gathering – meet with fellow ESRAG volunteers and Board Directors. Bring your own lunch (Saturday 27 May, 12.30 pm -1.30 pm AEDT)
- ESRAG Dinner at a popular Melbourne Restaurant (Sunday 28 May, starting at 7 pm AEDT)

Special ESRAG RICON resources:

- Use the [ESRAG Flight Carbon Estimator](#) to compensate your carbon emissions from flights to and from Melbourne and contribute to Rotary International's fund for environmental global grants.
 - Also at RICON, ESRAG will launch the Green Events Handbook – a new handbook with tips and tools to reduce the environmental impact of your club and district events!
 - Explore Sustainable Melbourne and meet your ESRAG RICON team [here](#)!
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Three Tools to Empower Your Club and Community

By Ariel Miller



“Personal carbon trackers can make one feel hopeless,” notes economist Dr. Nilam Bedi, ESRAG’s technical liaison to Rotary International. “How do we link our actions to impact? Rotarians are very action-oriented. We need optimality: a way to find the highest return for the action.” This month, ESRAG experts point us to excellent online resources that you can use to help your community to choose actions they can implement with confidence that they are making their community more resilient and successful. These

resources are [Drawdown Solutions](#), the [Global Footprint](#) Network, and the [En-ROADS](#) Climate Solutions Simulator.

Like the Planetary Boundaries, these tools start with a baseline, measuring the imbalance between human activity and the earth’s capacity to maintain the conditions we must have to live. All three empower you to evaluate what solutions your community can implement to improve both the world's and its own well-being.

??????? Graphic: Project Drawdown's vivid way to communicate the power and impact of different climate solutions.

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A Faith Community Puts Ethics into Action

By Ariel Miller

When one path fails, find another. Though what I am about to describe is not a Rotary project, I am a Rotarian. This is my own story about mobilizing who I am, where I serve, and who I know to live within our planetary means.

I’m from the American state of Ohio. In 2019, the Ohio Legislature passed a law killing the state’s requirement that utilities increase their renewable energy portfolios, as well as the program through which utilities had to help customers pay for efficiency retrofits. In the years before and since, these lawmakers also enacted several laws imposing higher hurdles on renewable energy projects than on other forms of electric generation. For years I’ve been submitting testimony imploring legislators to take a different path. So have the vast majority of the other citizens who wrote or called their legislators as these bills were introduced, debated, and passed. Every time, we went down in defeat.

But I belong to the Episcopal Church, one of the Christian denominations that see climate change as a humanitarian catastrophe. Within a year of these heartbreaking setbacks in public policy, a group of us persuaded the leaders of our church’s regional organization – the Diocese of Southern Ohio - to take action on the climate crisis through the matters we could control. We proposed a plan. The Trustees reflected, and turned it down. But then, to our amazement, they proposed something far more effective, making a vastly bigger commitment by all concerned.

This unfolded in the way climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe recommends: by appealing to shared

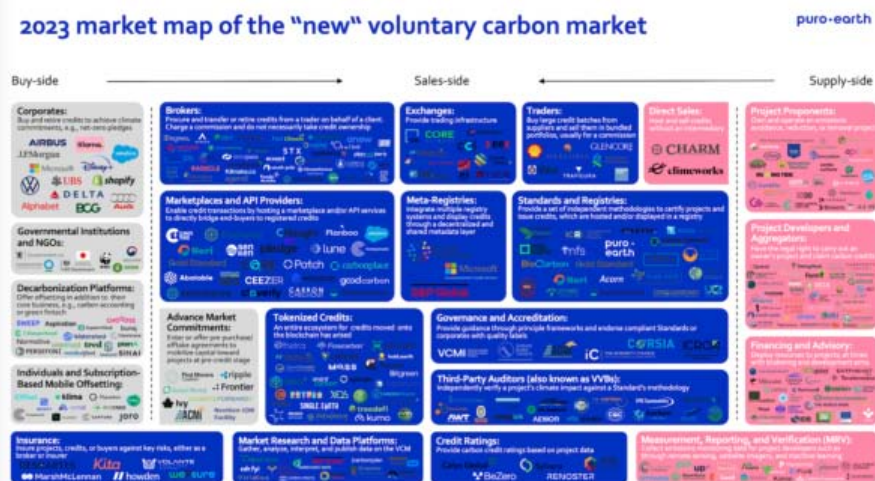


values and identifying win-win solutions. *Climbing onto the roof of a small church during an energy audit, fall, 2020.*
Photo by Ariel Miller.

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What the Heck is a Carbon Market?

By Joey O'Brien, Sustainability Consultant



Is the carbon market real? Take a look at this map identifying current actors in the voluntary carbon market.

If you have not been inundated with information about carbon credits or offsets, you might have found the perfect rock to hide under. But for the rest of us, let's clear up some of the confusion. A carbon tax is a fine for using the atmosphere like a dump. We pay our local waste commission to dispose of some of our garbage, but until now the atmosphere has been a

free dump.

There is a HUGE amount of misinformation spread by various media outlets about the voracity of carbon credits and or offsets. Much of comes from nefarious efforts by carbon-producing industries to protect the status quo. Starting in 2-3 years it won't really matter whether nations have a national carbon market, as our international banking and insurance industries will make reporting on environment, sustainability and governance (ESG) mandatory.

Carbon taxes won a Nobel Prize as the most efficient way to reduce carbon emissions. Many national, regional, and local governments have planned escalating carbon taxes.

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Tips for Promoting ESRAG at PETS

By Karen McDaniels, Co-Chair, ESRAG Central North America Regional Chapter

Lone Star PETS in Texas is Rotary's largest President-Elect Training conference in the US. It is always held the last weekend in February and invitations go out to 10 Districts. This year, there were also attendees from three other districts, not previously invited.

Every new club president and their board are looking for ideas for "signature" projects for their year, as well as projects that club members would enjoy doing, with the potential to become annual service projects.

We secured an ideal booth location for ESRAG in the House of Friendship (see more, below). In our

Below: Sallie Moore and Mike Weaver representing ESRAG in the House of Friendship at Lone Star PETS



Above: District 5910 Governor Demetress Harrell (L.) with Karen McDaniels at the ESRAG booth

conversations with visitors, we learned that some clubs had done small projects, like planting trees or adding pollinator gardens to a park. There was a huge amount of interest in recycling when we presented the “Corks for a Cause” project. A few club presidents said they had no interest in doing anything environmental, but when we told them about the lithium-ion battery project with Redwood Materials, they were quite on board. We think people need to be presented with ideas that fit their club profile to get them engaged.

In Texas, the average Rotary district has about 75 clubs. PETS captures the club President-Elects, President Elect Nominees, District Governor Elects and Area Governors. I was able to learn that over 1,100 attended the training. Some brought their spouses/partners with them.

Here’s more about how we built on the official program and used informal conversations to present the opportunities under Rotary’s newest area of focus to leaders at PETS.

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The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group

operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.
