



## VICTORY FOR GRASSY NARROWS! Boise to stop buying wood clear-cut from Indigenous community's land



**ABOVE:** 2,500 square miles of forests, lakes and rivers north of Kenora, Ontario have sustained the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation for thousands of years. Photo (c) Garth Lenz.

On February 28, Boise Inc. agreed to stop buying paper sourced from clear-cuts in Grassy Narrows – a major blow to AbitibiBowater in its quest to continue logging Grassy Narrows' traditional territory in northwestern Ontario. The announcement represents a significant victory for the Old Growth Campaign and the Grassy Narrows community, which has demanded a moratorium on all industrial activity on its traditional territory.

According to a letter from Boise to environmental certifiers dated Feb. 27, the company "wishes to honor the request of [Grassy Narrows] Chief [Simon] Fobister to discontinue sourcing fiber from the Traditional Use Area of Grassy Narrows." Boise is a major purchaser of pulp from AbitibiBowater; the company processes the pulp into paper and sells it to OfficeMax in the United States and Grand & Toy in Canada.

Boise's announcement followed an international day of action organized by RAN, targeting OfficeMax locations throughout the U.S. and Grand & Toy in Canada. Victories such as this one are testament to the power of grassroots actions to yield real results on the ground. Thank you RAN members!

Boise's new commitment is crucial because it puts substantial pressure on Ontario provincial officials to suspend the contested

clear-cut logging in Grassy Narrows. But while critical negotiations are ongoing, Abitibi and lumber giant Weyerhaeuser continue to clear-cut Grassy Narrows' forests—liquidating the very thing the community is trying to protect. RAN is keeping the pressure on these companies to follow Boise's example. With your continued support, we will continue to demand that these companies respect the rights of Grassy Narrows by logging only where free, prior and informed consent is given.

Clear-cutting the Boreal forest over the objections of First Nations is not just barbaric; it is shortsighted. After all, the Boreal is not just the longstanding home of Grassy Narrows and other Indigenous peoples; it is also the largest terrestrial carbon storehouse on Earth. American consumers are increasingly demanding an end to such reckless business practices, and it's time for Weyerhaeuser and AbitibiBowater to heed their call.



To learn more about RAN's work to protect old-growth forests and Indigenous rights, visit [RAN.org/oldgrowth](http://RAN.org/oldgrowth).



You can help support this campaign! Make a donation today at [RAN.org/give](http://RAN.org/give).



# RAN forces GM to scale back online greenwashing

By Robin Beck, Online Organizer

In response to a wave of criticism from RAN activists, General Motors was forced to scale back its latest online initiative, GMnext.com, a website whose sole purpose is to greenwash the company’s well-deserved reputation as a laggard on fuel economy and pollution. The site’s visitors were invited to participate in online discussions about GM’s vision for sustainability, post photos, and comment in forums. RAN activists took GM up on its offer by using the forums to blast the automaker’s poor environmental record and post photos of recent actions highlighting the auto industry’s role in accelerating global warming. In response, GM shut down several of the website’s features and trotted out spin doctors to initiate discussions with critics via online chats in which all but the most pressing critiques were ignored. The company also tried to quell concerns by commenting directly on RAN’s blog, *The Understory*. Recognizing this “new push for authenticity” as yet another example of corporate greenwashing, our efforts ultimately pushed GM to admit defeat by closing off the conversation altogether. Further embarrassment came GM’s way when articles detailing the events appeared in *The Detroit News*, *The Financial Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *PR Week Magazine*. The most powerful lesson, however, is that RAN



supporters were able to speak with a collective voice and get results by shutting down an ambitious greenwashing effort by one of the world’s most powerful corporations.

**Learn more about RAN's Freedom From Oil campaign at [RAN.org/freedomfromoil](http://RAN.org/freedomfromoil).**

**You can can help support this campaign! Make a donation today at [RAN.org/give](http://RAN.org/give).**

# RAN and Plug In America call for more electric cars

On March 27, RAN joined Plug In America and a swarm of electric vehicle advocates in Sacramento, Calif., to urge the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to resist pressure from automakers to weaken the state’s requirements for building pollution-free, zero-emissions, electric cars. As expected, CARB voted to kill the electric car, again, by reducing the requirements from 25,000 new electric cars to a paltry 7,500 by the year 2014. The decision was made despite enormous public opposition, including a rally and press conference outside CARB headquarters featuring prominent clean car enthusiasts, including R. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and actress Alexandra Paul. Just as Mr. Woolsey spoke, activists from RAN and Global Exchange unfurled a large banner from a parking garage across the street reading “Electric Cars - for a change!”



## The PANTHER

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Editor / Designer: Toben Dilworth  
Contributors: Robin Beck, Debra Erenberg, Sam Haswell, Joshua Kahn Russell, Jennifer Krill, Leila Salazar-Lopez, Margot Sands, Cameron Scott

For inquiries, comments, suggestions, please email [panther@ran.org](mailto:panther@ran.org)  
©2008 Rainforest Action Network | 221 Pine Street, #500  
San Francisco, CA 94104, USA | 415-398-4404 | [RAN.org](http://RAN.org)

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# RAN JOINS INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING DELEGATION TO MALAYSIA

Investigation finds extensive human rights abuses related to palm oil plantations  
By Debra Erenberg, RAN Organizing Director

In February, environmental concerns about biofuels went mainstream: Two articles published in the journal *Science* documented that the production of industrial biofuels—particularly palm oil-based biodiesel—spurs deforestation and actually results in higher greenhouse gas emissions than traditional fossil fuels.

Judging from the publicity generated by these articles, newsreaders in the United States now know that biofuels destroy rainforests, and that destroying rainforests exacerbates the climate crisis. But little has been made of the human toll this destruction exacts. In late April, Southeast Asian human rights and environmental groups including the Asian Pacific arm of Pesticide Action Network invited RAN to participate in a fact-finding mission to Sarawak—Malaysia’s largest state, on the island of Borneo. I participated on RAN’s behalf and saw first-hand how the West’s insatiable hunger for fuel harms forest communities.

Of Sarawak’s 2.2 million inhabitants, roughly half belong to Indigenous groups collectively known as the Dayak, who have lived in the area for millennia. But to gain official rights to the land where they live, communities must prove that they have used it continuously since 1958—which is difficult because traditional farming practices periodically leave fields fallow.

Rubber and fruit trees can serve as proof of communal use. But in one Dayak community I visited in Niah, the state sought evidence of communal agriculture by helicopter. Since rubber and fruit trees grow beneath the thick canopy of taller rainforest trees, none was found. In several communities, villagers told me that companies received a “Provisional Lease” from the state, then bulldozed the rubber and fruit trees that would have served as proof of community land ownership in court. In one case, six houses were also bulldozed. When plantations begin operating, they also deprive local communities of fish and clean water by releasing pesticide runoff into rivers.

In a village near Bintulu, community members described how Golden Hope oil palm company—which, like U.S. companies Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland, is one of the largest in the world—proposed a joint venture in which the community would receive 30 percent of the profits, leaving 60 percent for the company and 10 percent for the state. The community had no legal representation when villagers signed an “agreement” written in English, which they neither speak nor read. The agreement—signed with thumb prints—stipulates that villagers are squatting on company land and agree to dismantle their homes and leave.

In the Kampung Wawasan area, one community told me that an oil palm company had repeatedly sent thugs to pressure them into selling their land. Villagers filed more than 20 police reports, but the police never came. That is, until April 14, when the village leader was arrested for possessing a pistol without a license—a charge community members say is false. Other villagers were asked to come in for questioning about the case, but when they complied, they were arrested on undisclosed charges.

These tragedies are all too common. With foreign investment pouring into biofuels—even those that, like palm-based biodiesel, result in higher greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline—the financial temptation is great for multinational corporations to pressure Indigenous communities for their land. As 173 land rights cases drag on in Sarawak courts, corporations continue clear-cutting rainforests that Dayak communities had managed sustainably for centuries, replacing diverse subsistence crops with a single commodity crop for export.

American agribusiness giants ADM, Bunge and Cargill are major importers of Malaysian palm oil. Cargill’s Malaysian operations are so large that the company is the fourth-largest exporter of palm oil from Malaysia. These companies could never get away with their thuggish tactics if American consumers were aware of their practices or if Dayak communities had better access to the legal system. RAN’s Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign is exposing ADM, Bunge and Cargill and pressuring them to stop clearing rainforests and taking advantage of Indigenous communities to profit from snake-oil solutions to climate change.



ABOVE: Villagers at Rh. Nyalong are still waiting for their share of oil palm profits after eight years of empty promises.

**Take Action! You can help RAN identify products in the U.S. that contain palm oil made from rainforest destruction. Visit [TheProblemWithPalmOil.org](http://TheProblemWithPalmOil.org) and find out how you can become a Supermarket Sleuth!**

**You can can help support this campaign! Make a donation today at [RAN.org/give](http://RAN.org/give).**



# RAN Commemorates Fossil Fools Day



Emulating one of America's most iconic images, University of Kentucky students raise a wind turbine atop a hill of coal to protest the school's reliance on coal.

On April 1, RAN's Global Finance Campaign took part in Fossil Fools Day by co-sponsoring an international day of action in more than 100 locations throughout the world highlighting the foolishness of our addiction to fossil fuels. RAN activists went to their local Bank of America and Citi branches, deploying banners and engaging in lockdowns and street theater in order to call attention to the banks' destructive investments.

April 1 also marked the debut of *The Fossil Fools Awards*, an online contest in which more than 6,000 people voted for the individuals they deemed to have made the most significant contribution over the past year to the development and dissemination of fossil fuel-related pollution. Bank of America CEO Kenneth Lewis took home the top prize as he was named "Fossil Fool of the Year" for his company's massive financial support for coal-fired power and mountaintop removal coal mining. Ironically, that same day, BofA joined Citi and other leading banks in signing onto the so-called "Carbon Principles," which the banks are touting as an answer to the climate change problem.



RAN New York City activists, dressed as "Billionaires for Dirty Energy," demonstrate at the main entrance of Citi's headquarters to demand that Citi cease its large-scale investments in coal-fired power plants.

## the FOOLIES Fossil Fools Awards 2008

*"The individuals who have made the most significant contribution over the past year to the development and dissemination of fossil fuel-related pollution"*

### Fossil Fool of the Year

Kenneth Lewis, CEO of Bank of America, for the global financial institution's massive support for dirty coal. Bank of America is the leading financial backer of mountaintop removal coal mining in the United States and is a top funder of new coal-fired power plants.

### Outstanding Performance in Corporate Greenwashing

General Motors CEO Rick Wagoner, for his company's creation of GMNext.com, a website designed to promote GM's environmental progress even as the company attempted to block the efforts of California and 11 other states to reduce vehicle greenhouse gas emissions.

### Most Inauspicious Newcomer

Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) CEO Patricia Woertz, for her company's newfound recognition as a massive contributor to global warming for its role in clearing pristine rainforests around the world to produce soy and palm oil, in part for biofuels. Biofuels produced on newly cleared land result in more climate-changing carbon emissions than traditional fossil fuels.

### Biggest Human Toll

Cargill CEO Gregory R. Page, for the agribusiness giant's displacement of frontline communities throughout South America, Southeast Asia and the Pacific to make way for the expansion of its massive soy and palm oil plantations.

### Lifetime Achievement

George Bush and Dick Cheney, for their persistent efforts to deny the reality and impacts of global climate change, promote carbon-intensive energy solutions, and block progress toward curbing climate change.

*The full listing of nominees and a breakdown of voting is available at [www.fossilfools08.org/vote](http://www.fossilfools08.org/vote).*

# RYSE: RAN Youth Sustaining the Earth

Activist Profile: Margot Sands, Las Vegas RYSE

*RYSE is the youth branch of RAN. RYSE groups make up a network of young people working with RAN to inspire activism in schools and communities across the country. The RYSE network is 'rysing' up to take our Earth back from corporations, create a just energy future, and protect the world's forests.*

### Who is Las Vegas RYSE and how did you get started?

In the summer of 2007, I had the opportunity of working with RAN while on a youth summer program in San Francisco. The environmental and social issues that RAN focuses on inspired me to continue the organization's work and encourage others to do the same.

There are six core people, including myself, in RYSE Las Vegas: Alyssa Solis, Meghan Birch, Ellen Hall-Patton, Nate Phillippis, and Stevie Viveros. We are all juniors at Las Vegas Academy and we are the only active members of our school's Environmental Awareness Club.

### What do you feel are the most important issues facing youth?

As youth, we should be focusing on the sustainability of our future by promoting alternative, renewable fuels. We must work on advancing solar and wind power so that they become as efficient and accessible as today's dirty and hazardous energy options.



### How does RAN support your work?

RAN has provided us with an unlimited amount of support through resources and assistance for our actions and activism. Every RAN



campaign gives us, along with many other activists, the opportunity to participate in the direct action process, and integrates us into an activist movement focused on protecting our environment and our communities.

### What has been your most rewarding experience with activism?

During our Bank of America action a passerby, concerned about the bank's coal investments, said he was going to close his account. The fact that our action raised enough awareness and concern to get one stranger involved was very encouraging. It proves that activism is effective.



### What can we expect from Las Vegas RYSE?

RYSE Las Vegas will be doing major recruiting for the next school year to grow our chapter and ensure it continues after we graduate. On Earth Day, we successfully initiated a recycling program, which we will begin implementing next school year with a bang. We will also continue to support RAN's campaigns through local direct actions.

### Is there anything else you would like the wider RAN network to know about your group?

Our group's experiences with RAN/RYSE have inspired some of our career paths. Alyssa, our media advisor/liaison, had never intended to pursue environmental law until becoming apart of the wonderful world of RAN. Similarly, RAN has motivated me to practice environmental policy or environmental engineering.

*To learn more about RAN's growing youth network, visit [RYSEup.org](http://RYSEup.org).*

# RYSE youth converge at The Dream Reborn Conference



ABOVE: RAN supported 12 organizers from our youth network with scholarships to attend the Dream Reborn Conference in Memphis, Tenn. AT RIGHT: Download RAN's new brochure, "Don't Let Green Jobs Be a Greenwash" at [RAN.org](http://RAN.org).

On April 4, RAN organized a delegation of youth to attend The Dream Reborn, a conference to commemorate the extraordinary life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and present positive solutions from the new generation of visionary leaders. The conference was coordinated by Green For All as an opportunity for organizers to strategize, share ideas, and help build the movement to create green jobs. Over three days, participants discussed ecological solutions that bring jobs, justice, wealth and health to communities while empowering youth organizers to play an active role in becoming change makers. The conference also helped bridge some of the traditional gaps between environmental and social justice groups, allowing for increased partnerships to strengthen RAN's grassroots organizing.





## Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign

Defending forests, family farmers and our climate

Two Rainforest Agribusiness campaigners, Andrea Samulon and Jodie Van Horn, recently traveled through Argentina and Paraguay with representatives of partner organizations to witness first-hand the devastating effects of soy's expansion in the region.

Over a period of two weeks, Andrea and Jodie visited many *campesino* and Indigenous communities that are suffering as a result of soy expansion. Soy plantations cover 6.2 million acres in Paraguay alone. Communities there confront indiscriminate chemical and pesticide use, contamination of their streams and waterways, the disappearance of their forests, and sometimes violent pressure from soy producers and the government to abandon their lands altogether. Entire communities are often dismantled or forcibly removed to make way for soy plantations.

Cargill, one of RAN's corporate targets, is Paraguay's largest exporter of soy. It controls roughly 40 percent of the total soy production in Paraguay and owns 30 silos, processing facilities, and ports throughout the country. Andrea and Jodie had the opportunity to meet with the general manager of Cargill Paraguay to raise concerns about the company's latest project—a giant soy processing facility and port on the Rio Paraguay. Situated just 500 meters upstream from the public water utility intake for the capital city of Asuncion, the port will likely contaminate the drinking supply of more than 1 million people. Despite strong international opposition, Cargill is moving forward with the project.

While this trip demonstrated that companies like Cargill, with their insatiable appetite for profit, will continue to engage in practices that trample communities and the environment, it also affirmed RAN's important role in continuing to confront agribusiness giants at home in the U.S.

The Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign is building broad-based support in the United States to push U.S. agribusinesses to stop clearing rainforests and violating human rights to produce commodity crops. With your support, we can continue to demand change from Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, and Cargil - *the ABC's of rainforest destruction!*

**Contact Leila Salazar-Lopez, Rainforest Agribusiness campaign director, at [leila@ran.org](mailto:leila@ran.org) to get involved.**



*The Guarani Indigenous community in Alto Parana, Paraguay has been enveloped by Finca Golondrina, a soy plantation that produces thousands of hectares of so called "responsible soy."*

photo (c) Greenpeace / Daniel Beltrá

## Taking a stand against agrofuels



### ADM CEO Patricia Woertz confronted at *Wall Street Journal* conference

RAN created quite a stir at *The Wall Street Journal's* exclusive ECO:nomics conference in Santa Barbara in March, where CEOs from around the country gathered to discuss integrating environmental concerns and profitability. When ADM CEO Patricia Woertz took the stage, RAN's Brihannala Morgan challenged her company's support for clear-cutting tropical forests in Southeast Asia to make way for palm oil. RAN's intervention led to an important discussion of agrofuels.

### RAN pressures International Development Bank to back off of agrofuels

Ignoring the negative environmental and social impacts of the expansion of soy plantations, The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved \$45 million in loans to fund destructive biofuels projects and is considering another \$3 billion in private-sector loans. On April 4, RAN and a coalition of allies confronted IDB officials at their annual meeting in Miami Beach, Fla., with a banner drawing attention to the bank's dirty investments in agrofuels. The protest was included in the *Miami Herald's* coverage of the meeting.



## Paper scandal fuels growing opposition to proposed Tasmanian pulp mill

An update from RAN's Japan Office

RAN's Japan office continues to play a central role in protecting Tasmania's old-growth forests by pressuring the Japanese paper industry to stop purchasing woodchips from Australian logging giant Gunns Ltd. Gunns has been internationally condemned for its destructive logging practices in Tasmania, which include clear-cutting ancient forests, killing native wildlife with 1080 poison, and deliberately burning vast areas of logged forest. In addition to habitat destruction, logging in Tasmania's carbon-rich forest is driving climate change through the release of huge stores of greenhouse gases.

Approximately 80 percent of Gunns' woodchips are exported to Japan and made into paper products. A RAN report released in June 2007 identified Japanese paper companies Nippon and Oji as Gunns' biggest woodchip buyers. In January, Nippon and Oji were at the center of a major Japanese paper scandal when both companies were found to be deceiving consumers about the amount of recycled paper being used in their recycled paper products. Worse yet, as these two companies are Gunns' largest customers, it appears likely that they have been using woodchips stripped from Tasmanian forests in their "recycled paper."

Oji was forced to admit to an outraged Japanese public that its recycled paper content was between five and 10 percent – it had claimed as much as 50 percent – and that the falsification had gone on for more than 10 years! Nippon's president, Akio Mimura, resigned due to major consumer backlash, and Fuji Xerox indicated that it would withdraw Nippon's recycled paper line completely from sale, with other sellers expected to follow suit.

Meanwhile, in Tasmania, RAN and its Australian allies continue to pressure ANZ, Australia's third largest bank, to withdraw funding for the construction of Gunns' new pulp mill, which will accelerate the conversion of Tasmania's native and old-growth forests to fast-growing tree plantations. As part of a national day of action targeting ANZ last November, more than 15,000 people took to the streets of Hobart, Tasmania, to protest ANZ's potential financing of the pulp mill.

With the international spotlight focused on the credibility of Japan's paper companies, and growing opposition to Gunns' proposed pulp mill in Tasmania, RAN is well-positioned to shift the Japanese paper industry away from one of the world's most notorious loggers and protect Tasmania's remaining old-growth forests.

Two Japanese paper companies, Mitsubishi and Daio, have already eliminated old-growth and high conservation value wood in their supplies and now only purchase plantation wood from Tasmania. Other companies, including Asia Pulp & Paper, have severed all business ties with Gunns. With your continued support, we can put an end to Gunns' destructive logging practices and help save Tasmania's old-growth forests.



*In February, RAN Japan campaigner Toyo Kawakami traveled to Tasmania with a documentary film crew and representatives of the Sloth Club, Japan's foremost grassroots environmental organizing network. The delegation met with Australian ally organizations and government officials while touring national parks and recent clear-cuts by Gunns Ltd. Photo courtesy of Australian Wilderness Society.*



**ABOVE:** RAN Japan campaigner Toyo Kawakami (second from left) and activists demonstrate in Japan against ANZ, Australia's leading financier of environmentally destructive projects.





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## Save the Date for **REVEL 2008** THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2008 6 P.M. - LATE FORT MASON CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO

Don't miss this year's gathering of 650 of RAN's closest friends, set to take place at a fabulous new waterside location. The event includes dinner, drinks, silent and live auctions, dancing, and the presentation of the World Rainforest Awards - all to raise critical funds for RAN's work.

For advance table and ticket reservations, please visit [www.ran.org/give/revel](http://www.ran.org/give/revel) or contact Katie Steele at (415) 659-0537 or [ksteele@ran.org](mailto:ksteele@ran.org).

## YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN YOU SUPPORT RAN!

*If a tree falls in the forest, and there's no one around to hear it, does it make a sound?*

At RAN, we work to make sure that when a tree falls in the forest, YOU get heard. **Our actions and victories would not be possible without your support.**

Since 1985, you have helped us push companies to balance profits with principles. Your voice has been critical to the protection of the environment and Indigenous communities around the world. You have helped us protect millions of acres of forests in Canada, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile and beyond.

**Thank you for supporting Rainforest Action Network!**

**RIGHT:** Old Growth campaigner Annie Sartor delivers 10,000 petitions signed by RAN members to Weyerhaeuser's corporate headquarters in Federal Way, Wash.



*"Thank you so much for all your hard work—ALL THOSE 10,000 PEOPLE THAT SIGNED - !!!!!GITCHI MEEGWETCH!!!! (means thank you in Anishinabemowin). Your efforts, and us knowing you're out there doing the work keeps us going in the fight to protect the forest and the future generations."*

- Judy Da Silva

Anishinabe Nation, Lynx Clan Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows)