



RAN, ALLIES ESCALATE MOVEMENT AGAINST COAL



"If you're a young person looking at the future of this planet...I believe we have reached the stage where it is time for civil disobedience,"

- Former Vice President and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Al Gore.

Four years ago, RAN joined a chorus of environmentalists raising concerns over plans to build 150 new coal-fired power plants across the United States. Today, the growing movement against coal has defeated dozens of these plans and is actively opposing the rest.

Citizens young and old, urban and rural, from the U.S. and abroad are joining the call to stop coal-fired power plants before they ever come on line. Even Al Gore has called for young people to participate in civil disobedience to prevent the construction of new coal plants.

Coal is responsible for nearly 40 percent of America's global warming emissions. Currently, 110 coal plants are still slated for development in the United States. In Appalachia and other regions across the U.S., mountaintop removal is flattening mountain ranges and transforming healthy mountain watersheds into toxic sludge.

Citi is the U.S.'s largest coal financier, providing financial support to 45 companies that have proposed new coal power plants. Bank of America is involved with eight of America's top mountaintop removal coal-mining operators, which collectively produce more than 250 million tons of coal each year.

Shifting investment away from coal and toward 21st century clean energy technologies will help curb catastrophic climate change and put people to work by creating green jobs. Stopping coal proliferation has become a moral imperative, and the time to act is now.



ABOVE: ON SEPTEMBER 15, RAN JOINED WITH APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN A PEACEFUL PROTEST THAT SHUT DOWN THE SITE OF A DOMINION COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT IN RURAL WISE COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH PALM OIL?

ALL EYES ON WALL STREET - REFRAMING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

By Rebecca Tarbotton, Global Finance Campaign Director



As we begin to assess the full repercussions of the financial crisis, we must also examine the underlying cracks that have been exposed in our financial system.

For the past eight years, RAN has urged America's leading financial institutions to take responsibility for the impacts of their investments in environmentally unsustainable and socially unjust projects—from rainforest destruction and oil extraction to the construction of coal-fired power plants.

In the wake of the recent bank consolidations and failures, the U.S. is now left with three dominant banks. This “Big 3” consists of Bank of America, Citi and JPMorgan Chase. These banks are the lead financial backers of the coal industry and the oil and gas sector at a time when climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions are already

ABOVE: ACTIVISTS SCALED THE 40-FOOT FLAGPOLES BEHIND THE ICONIC WALL STREET BULL TO CALL FOR AN END TO WALL STREET’S RECKLESS FINANCIAL PRACTICES. PHOTO: TIM VIREO KEATING

RAN HOSTS NATIONAL ACTIVIST GATHERING IN CHICAGO

In September, RAN co-hosted a 3-day activist gathering in Chicago with the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC). We brought together more than 60 RAN and RYSE (RAN Youth Sustaining the Earth) supporters from all over North America, as well as members of SEAC and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). Highlights of the gathering included a “Toxic Tour” of local communities facing oil refinery expansions; a panel featuring community members on the frontlines of environmental justice struggles in Appalachia, Paraguay and Canada; and plenty of networking among the various participants, many of whom were meeting other RAN activists for the first time.

The gathering concluded with an exciting, youth-led street theater action directly outside the Chicago Board of Trade, where ADM, Bunge and Cargill buy and sell soy and palm oil commodity crops cultivated on newly cleared rainforest land.

negatively impacting the economy, our environment, and public health.

Now more than ever, we must hold banks accountable for the impacts of their investments to ensure that we do not mortgage the Earth’s natural capital in the same way that we have mortgaged the futures of millions of Americans who have lost their homes or savings during this economic crisis.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to lay the foundations of a new economy based on a just financial system that operates within ecological limits. It’s time for Americans to demand structural solutions that put families before financiers and the planet before profits.



IN BOSTON, MORE THAN 150 PEOPLE GATHERED TO DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM CITI AND BANK OF AMERICA FOR THE BANKS’ FUNDING OF COAL AND PROFITING FROM PREDATORY LENDING.



The PANTHER

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From the Canopy

By Michael Brune, RAN Executive Director

This article first appeared as an Op-Ed in *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

Clean Coal: A Contradiction in Terms



Dear friends,

If you are a politician running for national office – or a coal or utility executive – the notion of “clean coal” is alluring, much like pledging to lower taxes without cutting services. Like other campaign promises, however, citizens are well advised to seek the truth before committing.

During their recent debates, neither the presidential nor vice presidential candidates dared admit the truth: There is no such thing as “clean coal.” Despite years of research and billions in government subsidies, not a single commercial coal plant in the U.S. can capture and stores its greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, many scientists and even coal utility executives say the technology is at least a decade away. For policymakers and others concerned about climate change, the real question is not whether coal can be made clean, but whether we should even try.

“Clean coal” can mean many things to many people. Until recently, the phrase was often used to describe various processes to reduce air and water pollution caused by mining and burning coal, such as installing scrubbers on smokestacks to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions that cause acid rain. But the industry’s biggest problem is that coal is the country’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. So now “clean coal” usually refers to carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), an attempt to capture a plant’s carbon emissions and store them underground, permanently, rather than releasing them into the atmosphere to contribute to global climate change.

The biggest challenges of CCS for the U.S. coal industry pertain to scale and cost, both of which are massive. Researchers at MIT estimate that if less than two-thirds of the carbon dioxide from U.S. coal plants were captured and compressed for storage, the collective volume to be stored underground “would about equal the total U.S. oil consumption of 20 million barrels per day.”

Building an infrastructure to accomplish this would not be cheap. The Department of Energy’s National Energy Technology Laboratory found that adding CCS to existing coal plants would increase the cost of electricity generation by 81 percent. This includes neither the rising cost of coal, nor the heightened cost of new coal plant

construction, which has surged by more than 130 percent since 2000.

Assuming these challenges can be met, then what? Coal will still be dirty. The American Lung Association estimates that pollution from coal-fired power plants triggers 550,000 asthma attacks and 38,000 heart attacks annually, helping to cause an estimated 24,000 Americans to die prematurely each year. Coal combustion is also the country’s largest source of mercury poisoning and releases more than five dozen different types of hazardous air pollutants.

And don’t tell Appalachians that coal is clean. Mountaintop removal coal mining has flattened 450 mountains and buried more than 700 miles of rivers and streams in one of the country’s most beautiful regions.

Rather than perpetuate our country’s dependence on dirty energy, we can rejuvenate our economy with a transition to truly clean and renewable energy resources. Each year, the price of coal soars, while the costs of solar and wind decline. A report prepared for the California Public Utilities Commission earlier this year estimated that “clean coal” plants would cost 17 cents per kilowatt hour, compared to 12.7 cents for utility-scale solar power and just 9 cents for wind. Moreover, an analysis of more than a dozen independent reports studying the impacts of clean energy on employment found that wind power produces up to three times as many jobs as coal per unit of power produced. Rooftop solar produces seven to ten times as many jobs.

“Clean coal” is both an oxymoron and an excuse policymakers use to avoid developing a responsible energy policy. Every dollar spent on a “clean coal” infrastructure is a dollar better invested in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

For a better world,

Michael Brune

Michael Brune
Executive Director

 Michael Brune is the author of *Coming Clean: Breaking America's Addiction to Oil and Coal*. Check ComingCleanBook.org for more information.

IS AGRIBUSINESS SLIPPING RAINFOREST DESRUCTION INTO YOUR SHOPPING CART?

By Leila Salazar-Lopez, Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign Director

Most of us want to be conscientious consumers. We like to know what is in the products we buy and where they came from, and we choose not to support companies that abuse farmers, workers or the environment. That is why we on the Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign are so excited to be working on a new retail strategy on palm oil. With the help of activists and supporters like you, we are urging retail companies that put palm oil in their products to phase out palm oil and help us pressure major palm oil suppliers like Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge and Cargill to stop destroying rainforests, communities and our climate for palm oil plantations.

Palm oil is the biggest and fastest growing threat to tropical rainforests today – contributing to massive deforestation throughout Malaysia and Indonesia. Borneo, the Pacific island where Malaysia meets Indonesia, has already lost half of its forests, and if current trends continue, less than a third will remain by 2020.

The palm oil trade harms people as well as trees. Companies like the Wilmar Group – a subsidiary of American agribusiness giant ADM – are stealing land from communities that live near forests, razing people's farms, and evicting them from their homes. Even when communities are left standing, residents must cope with pollution from palm oil plantations that poisons their food and water supplies.

While the biggest driver of palm oil expansion is rising demand for industrially produced agrofuels, 90 percent of all palm oil supplies

still go to consumer goods and food products. Many companies now use palm oil as a replacement for partially hydrogenated oils, which means the amount of palm oil used in food is growing too. Countless products you can easily find at your local supermarket contain palm oil that was likely grown on recently cleared rainforest land.

We don't want to eat or bathe at the expense of rainforests, and we know you don't either.

Since August, 34 food and consumer companies and two organic palm oil suppliers have signed RAN's pledge to stop buying unsustainable palm oil. Signatories range from the organically inclined, like Dr. Bronners, to luxury imports like L'Occitane. This gives consumers the option to purchase from businesses that are committed to ethical behavior. These companies have promised to monitor where their suppliers get palm oil, and to never use palm oil produced on land that was recently deforested or taken from communities without their free, prior and informed consent.

We could never have come this far without your help. Since we first employed our new retail strategy, our grassroots supporters have pitched in at every level. This summer, regular citizens across the U.S. went to their supermarkets to help us identify products that contain palm oil and register them on TheProblemWithPalmOil.org. In August, more than 2,000 people from 46 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces participated in our International Sticking Day of Action, applying stickers reading "Warning: May Contain Rainforest Destruction" to any and all items with palm oil.

We also organized the delivery of 1.3 million emails to the 350 companies we determined were using palm oil. Each time a supporter took action, an email was issued to each company urging it to stop using palm oil in its products. As soon as the email bombardment hit, companies began calling us to figure out how to get the target off their backs.

In late October, more than 900 grassroots activists participated in our Halloween Week of Action by sticking Halloween candies at stores and then writing letters to the heads of the candy makers. In the coming months, we plan to narrow our targets and organize protests at company retail outlets or headquarters. Go to TheProblemWithPalmOil.org to keep up with the action and to find out which companies have signed the pledge to date.

Stay tuned. The Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign continues to gain momentum, and we have big plans for the coming year! With your help, we will stop the expansion of palm oil into tropical rainforests around the world.



Take Action! Go to TheProblemWithPalmOil.org and tell the "Dirty 20" companies that it's time to stop destroying rainforests for palm oil.



You can help support this campaign!
Make a donation today at RAN.org/give.

Palm oil plantations threaten endangered orangutans



RAN staffer Somer Huntley recently spent 2 weeks volunteering with Orangutan Foundation International (OFI) in East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Palm oil plantations are expanding into the planet's most biodiverse ecosystems, including rainforests, grasslands and peat swamps in South America, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Africa. These regions are home to millions of plant and animal species such as clouded leopards, sun bears, and highly endangered orangutans. In the last 20 years, more than 80 percent of suitable orangutan habitat has been destroyed, forcing them into smaller, fragmented areas that reduce their long-term chances for survival.

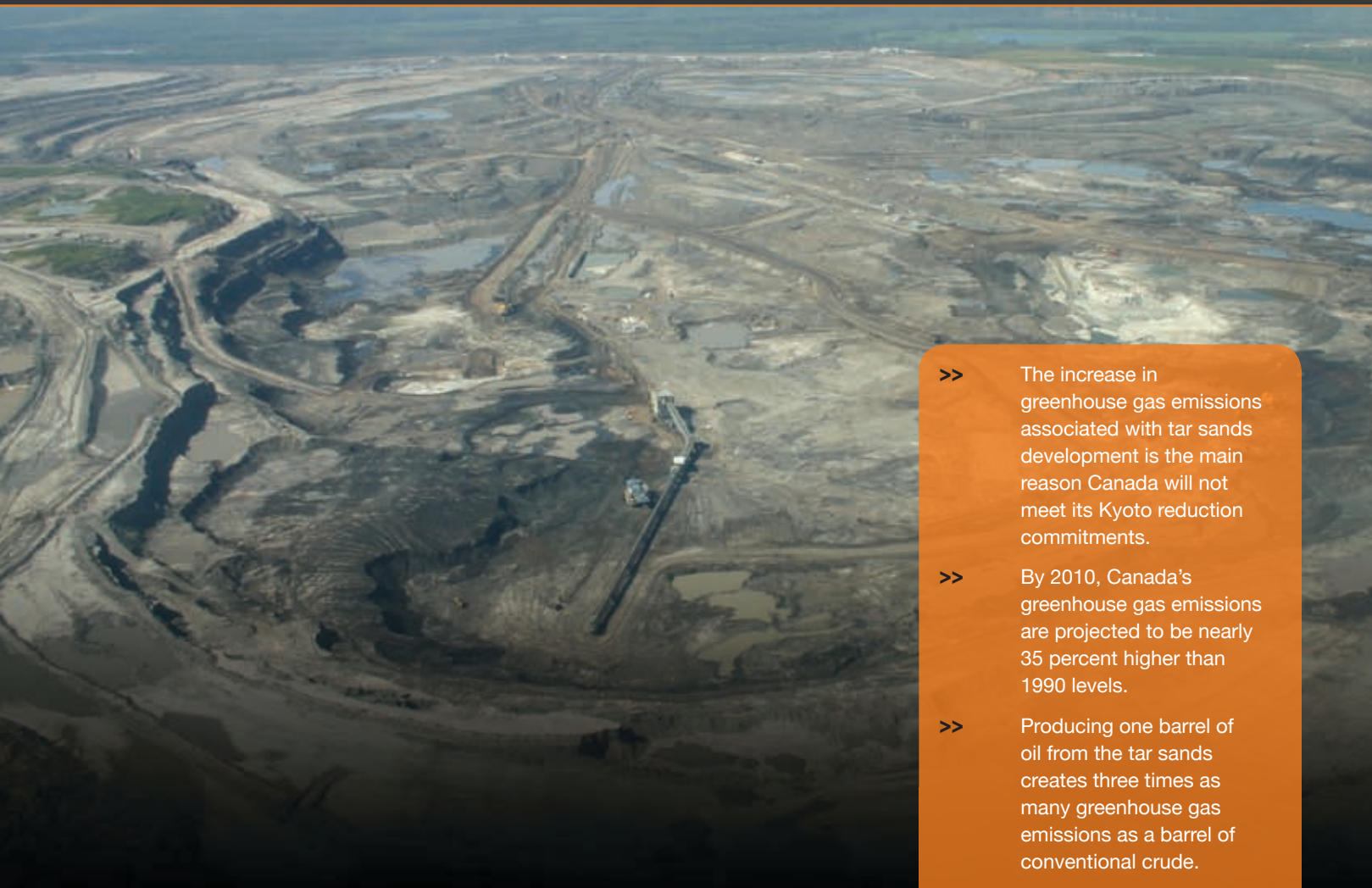
In Indonesia, a country with one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world, palm oil plantations are projected to cover 16.5 million hectares by 2020. Experts predict orangutans could become extinct as early as 2011.

It is estimated that 5,000 orangutans are killed each year by poachers, a practice exacerbated by their classification as 'agricultural pests' by palm oil plantation owners.



RAN gears up for campaign to stop the Alberta tar sands

The most destructive project on Earth



- >> The increase in greenhouse gas emissions associated with tar sands development is the main reason Canada will not meet its Kyoto reduction commitments.
- >> By 2010, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be nearly 35 percent higher than 1990 levels.
- >> Producing one barrel of oil from the tar sands creates three times as many greenhouse gas emissions as a barrel of conventional crude.

ABOVE: THE MINING OF THE TAR SANDS IS ALREADY TURNING CRITICAL WETLANDS AND ONCE-PRISTINE STRETCHES OF CANADA'S VAST BOREAL FOREST INTO DESOLATE LANDSCAPES MARRED BY SPRAWLING OPEN-PIT MINES THAT CAN BE VIEWED FROM SPACE. PHOTO: BRANT OLSON

In Canada's boreal forest, just downstream of the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains, are the Alberta tar sands. The region contains some 2 trillion barrels of oil, but getting to it could mean destroying an area larger than the state of Florida.

Tar sands consist of heavy crude oil mixed with sand, clay and bitumen. Extraction entails burning natural gas to generate enough heat and steam to melt the oil out of the sand. Tar sands oil is the worst type of oil for the climate, producing three times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventionally produced oil because of the energy required to extract and process it. In addition, up to five barrels of water are needed to produce a single barrel of oil.

In Canada, the toxic burden on communities near the tar sands is enormous. Oil contamination in the local watershed has led to arsenic in moose meat—a dietary staple of many First Nation communities—up to 33 times acceptable levels. Drinking water has also been contaminated.

There are plans in the U.S. to spend \$100 billion on refineries and pipelines for tar sands oil. Although a new oil refinery has not been built in the U.S. for more than 30 years, three are now being proposed to process oil directly from the tar sands.

Seventeen other refineries are proposing massive expansions that will make matters worse for neighboring communities already suffering from high incidences of asthma and respiratory diseases, cancer, and cardiovascular problems.

The alternative is simple: break our addiction to oil and fossil fuels. We can chart a clean energy future simply by redirecting the investment capital slated for the tar sands into sustainable alternatives. More investments in clean energy also means new green jobs. We need to stop investing in dirty fossil fuels and start funding the future.

RAN is joining with First Nations fighting tar sands projects in Alberta, as well as with grassroots activists fighting the expansion of refineries in the United States. But we need your help. We are planning major actions across the country, and we will be asking you to join us to make sure that our voices are heard. By working together, we can stop the expansion of the tar sands.



Join RAN and a growing chorus of environmental groups from around the world in opposing this devastating project - Visit RAN.org/tarsands



You can help RAN launch this campaign! Make a donation today at RAN.org/give.

REVEL 2008

A benefit so fun it should be illegal.

On Oct. 16, RAN's closest friends and supporters celebrated REVEL: *The Art of Activism*. The all-green event attracted 400 guests and local environmental luminaries to honor five outstanding international environmental leaders at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center. The event featured a three-course dinner, a "You Have the Right to Remain Silent" auction, and dancing to the music of popular Bay Area band Vinyl.

The Art of Activism theme is a nod to the skill and creativity supporting RAN's 23 years of direct action for the Earth. Over the years, RAN has become a giant in the environmental movement, using a diverse array of tactics to send clear messages to multinational corporations that environmentally and socially destructive practices are unwelcome in the 21st century global marketplace. This year, RAN celebrated significant victories in the Canadian boreal, including a commitment by the Canadian government to protect 56 million acres of Ontario's old-growth forest and the historic withdrawal of logging giant AbitibiBowater from the traditional homeland of the Grassy Narrows First Nation.



2008 AWARD RECIPIENTS

JACK JOHNSON

A renowned singer-songwriter and activist, Johnson is paving the way for a greener music industry and educating millions of fans worldwide about the importance of protecting our planet. Johnson has lowered his own carbon footprint by using community-based biodiesel for his tour buses and solar-powering his latest album.

BILL MCKIBBEN

An author, journalist and environmental educator who for nearly two decades has lead the fight against climate change, McKibben is a founder and leader of 350.org, a global grassroots campaign for a strong international climate treaty.

SENATOR MARIA SILVA

A Brazilian environmentalist, politician and lifelong activist, Silva has garnered national and international acclaim as a champion of environmental and social causes. She has fought for poverty alleviation, sustainable development, biodiversity protection and Indigenous rights in the Amazon region. A founder of the international trade union movement with Chico Mendes, Silva became the first rubber tapper ever elected to Brazil's federal senate in 1994 and served as minister for the environment from 2003 to 2008.

KRISTINE AND DOUGLAS TOMPKINS

Two of the great conservationists of our time, the Tompkins successfully campaigned to permanently protect more than two million acres of critical Patagonian wilderness. Additionally, the couple has founded three organizations dedicated to the preservation of wild nature: Foundation for Deep Ecology, The Conservation Land Trust, and Conservacion Patagonica.

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): BILL MCKIBBEN AND RAN PROGRAM DIRECTOR JENNIFER KRILL; RAN BOARD CHAIR JIM GOLLIN AND KRISTINE TOMPKINS; VINYL ROCKS THE CROWD; RAN FOUNDER RANDY HAYES AND DOUGLAS TOMPKINS. PHOTOS BY SUSANA MILLMAN

JOURNEY WITH RAN TO THE HEART OF THE AMAZON

You are invited to join RAN's Rainforest Agribusiness Campaign on a mission to the Amazon where we will witness the unparalleled beauty, the unconscionable destruction, and the actions being taken to preserve this global treasure. Join RAN staff and committed activists for this once-in-a-lifetime experience in one of the most magical and threatened places on Earth. Become a deeper part of the solution to the terrible practices that continue to plague the Amazon.

For more information, please visit www.RAN.org/amazon09. To book your place on the delegation, contact RAN Development Associate Meghan Weimer at meghan@ran.org or 415-659-0536.



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SUPPORT RAN

Become a Rainmaker

As the top financial supporters of RAN's effective, hard-hitting campaigns, Rainmakers play a key role in our shared vision to protect Earth's most unique and treasured regions.

Rainmakers are at the vanguard of RAN's vital work. By making an annual donation of \$1,000 or more, Rainmakers receive a host of benefits, including:

-  Invitations to intimate events like our annual open house and our regular Rainmaker Salon dinners, where we discuss the latest in activist campaigns.
-  Direct access to RAN leadership and staff.
-  A personalized certificate signed by RAN's executive director, Michael Brune.
-  With your permission, your name will appear in RAN's annual report to recognize you for your generosity.
-  Opportunity to partake in RAN's life-changing donor delegations abroad.



For more information, contact Meghan Weimer at (415) 659-0536, or visit www.RAN.org/rainmaker.



This holiday season, give the gift of Protect-an-Acre. Recipients will be sent a certificate of recognition in their name informing them of your generous donation, along with a description of the projects they are supporting.

Since 1993, RAN's Protect-an-Acre program has distributed more than \$850,000 in small grants to traditionally underfunded organizations and communities in forest regions.

You can make your gift online at www.RAN/give, or by calling our membership department at (415) 659-0542.