

October 31st, 2015

Megan Phelps
megankphelps
megastar.phelps@gmail.com
Mt. Everest Academy

Subject: Project Green Challenge Day 30 Greener

Dear Turning Green Team,

Below, please find a collection of ten submissions I am most proud of.

Throughout the Project Green Challenge, I went from caring about the Earth to becoming impassioned about relieving suffering in the world through environmental consciousness. I have never felt so fiercely driven to live compassionately as I do after completing this challenge.

I am committed to educating my community about what I've learned, and I truly hope to help transform the world.

I look forward to remaining connected with you throughout the continuation of my environmental journey.

I can't describe how thankful I am for your support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this transformative experience.

Best,

Megan

Days 3+4: Food

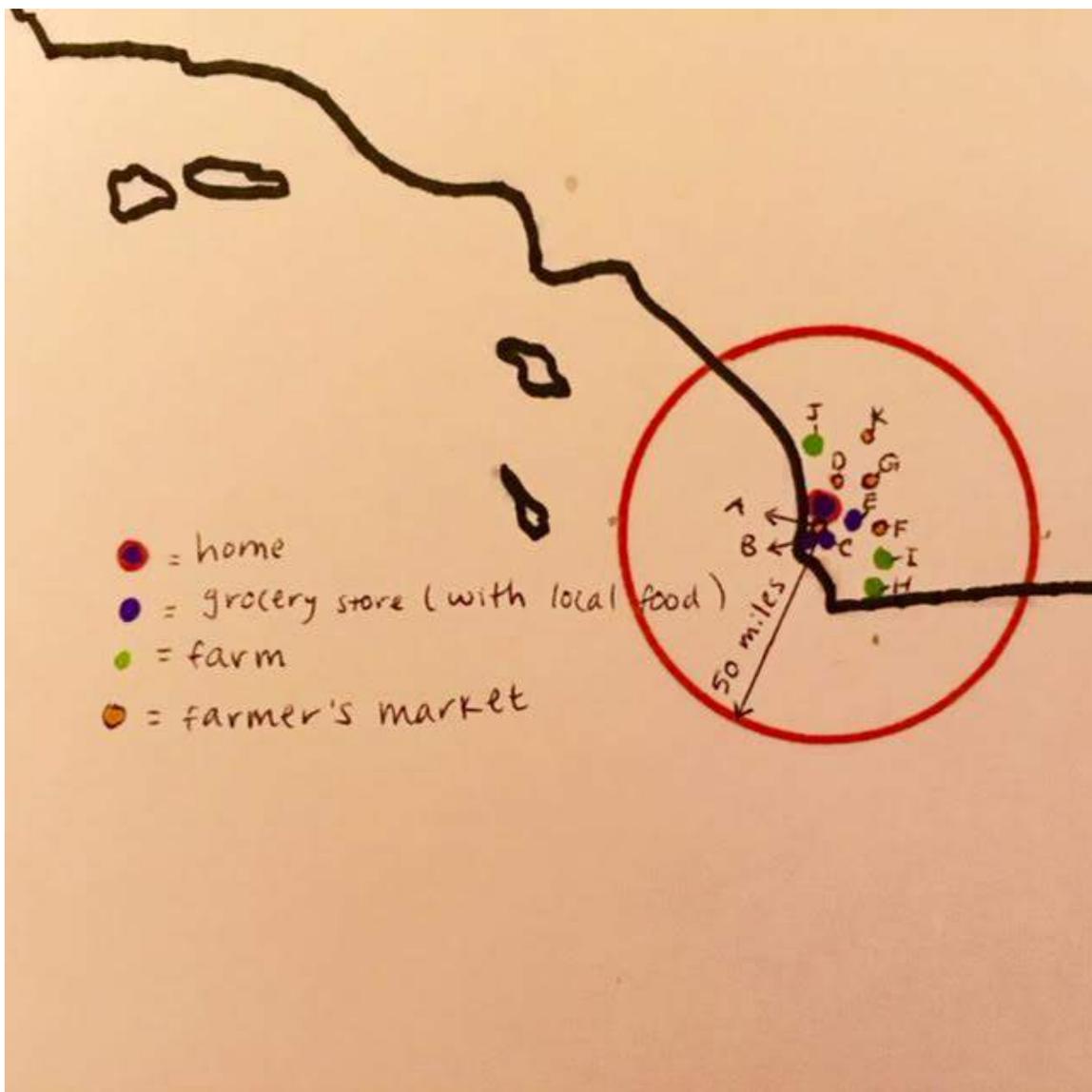
EXTRA CREDIT

THINK

Have you ever thought about where your food comes from? You *can* find FLOSN food anywhere! No matter where you live, people have invested their lives in transforming local food sheds.

CHALLENGE

- Create a map of your local food shed.



- Include 5-10 links that highlight farm stands, farmers' markets, local/organic grocers, co-ops, farms, or any business that produces or sells FLOSN foods, within 50 miles of your school/home.

Key:

A. La Jolla Farmer's Market: <https://www.facebook.com/La-Jolla-Open-Aire-Market-106322796070734/>

B. Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Co-op: <http://obpeoplesfood.coop/>

C. Stehly Farms Market: <http://stehlyfarmsmarket.com>

D. UTC Farmer's Market: <https://www.facebook.com/UTCFarmersMarket>

E. Wholefoods La Jolla: <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/lajolla>

F. Hillcrest Farmer's Market: <http://hillcrestfarmersmarket.com/>

G. Clairemont Farmer's Market: <http://www.sdweeklymarkets.com/>

H. Wild Willow Farms: <http://www.sandiegoroots.org/farm/index.php>

I. Suzie's Farm: <http://suziesfarm.com/>

J. Sea Breeze Organic Farm: <http://seabreezed.com/>

K. Mira Mesa Farmer's Market: <http://sdfarmbureau.org/BuyLocal/Farmers-Markets.php>

- Identify one chef, farmer, or business owner that you have included in your map. Reach out to them and set a time to meet.

I chose the General Manager of the Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Co-op (who is also my grandmother).

Nancy Casady is the General manager of our local organic food co-op ([Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Market](#)), and is also a member of the California State Food and Agriculture Board. Today, we spoke about organic agriculture. She says that organic agriculture is important, "because it's an agricultural system that eliminates the use of harmful chemicals that destroy the microbial life in the soil and have potential long term-health effects—negative health effects—on the people who eat the food."



- During your visit:
 - Take a photo



- Record a video (no longer than 2:30 minutes). Ask why they do what they do, their vision of a sustainable food system, and two more questions of your choice.

See full interview here:

<https://youtu.be/PXRI0fbSc40>

- Request one of their favorite recipes made with locally-sourced ingredients including full instructions.

Baked Apples

Ingredients:

Four apples – any type (local)

1 teaspoon of cinnamon

¼ cup maple syrup

2 tablespoons of Earth Balance spread

Heat the oven to 350 degrees

Core and stem the apples

Place upright in a shallow baking pan

Distribute remaining ingredients evenly over the apple centers

Bake one hour

Serve with warm with dairy-less cream

Day 10: Biodiversity

EXTRA CREDIT

CHALLENGE

- **Use The Pollinator Toolkit that Turning Green has developed with Center for Food Safety and Friends of the Earth to take the first steps toward integrating pollinator-friendly habitats on your campus.**
- **Find out what pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides are currently used on campus and where.**

The San Diego Unified School District (which my school is a part of) lists all the pesticides it uses on the website. The following chemicals are on their “approved pesticide list.” I wrote up a summary of the environmental and health of effects of all of them:

Avert—Health effects: Harmful if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through skin (“slightly toxic after short-term skin contact). **Environmental effects:** It is harmful to the environment if discharged into the subsoil/soil or drains, surface water, or groundwater.

Borid—Health effects: “Large amounts absorbed into blood stream from ingestion or...damaged skin may result in erythema, macular rash, nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, depression, CNS effects after 24 hours through broken skin or 36-72 hours from ingestion.” It also caused reproductive harm in male and female lab animals.

Credit 41 Extra— Health effects: Harmful if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through skin. Can cause liver damage and decrease body weight

gains. May cause gastrointestinal problems. **Environmental effects:**
“Prevent material from entering public sewer systems or any waterways.”

Ditrac—Health effects: Limited, since it is a wax block. **Environmental effects:** Highly toxic to wildlife, even when a predator consumes prey that has ingested this chemical.

Dragnet— Health effects: Hypersensitivity to stimulus, convulsions.
Environmental effects: Highly toxic to fish and arthropods, slightly toxic to birds.

Drione— Health effects: Caused harm to “liver, lung, thyroid, and/or nervous system in chronic studies in mice, rats, and dogs.” Has suggested evidence of carcinogenicity. Caused neurobehavioral effects in rats.
Environmental warnings: Do not allow into waterways or drains, or during times with increased possibility of runoff.

Fusilade—Health effects: “Reductions in weight gain, fetal weight, ossification, testicular weight, spleen weight, increased prostate weight and gestation length.” High doses given to dogs caused serious effects (“red cell, bone marrow, and lymphadenopathy [disease that attacks lymph nodes]”). It is an anticipated carcinogen. It can cause “cataracts, liver damage, kidney failure, respiratory failure, hematuria [blood in urine], anemia, damage to red blood cells, leukocytosis [surplus of white blood cells, as seen during infections], or coma.” **Environmental effects:** Toxic to fish and invertebrates, slightly so to birds, but “practically non-toxic to bees.”

Glyphosate Pro 4—Health effects: Moderately irritating to eyes.
Environmental effects: Absorbs strongly to soil, and is cautioned not to be transferred into water. Its LD₅₀ value is 100 micrograms per bee.

Gopher Getter 2—Health Effects: Is an anticoagulant (affects the blood's ability to clot). **Environmental effects:** None listed.

Ground squirrel bait—Health effects: Is intended to cause internal bleeding if consumed. **Environmental warnings:** Do not release into water.

Knighthawk—Health effects: Is mildly irritating to eyes. **Environmental effects:** “Environmentally hazardous substance...marine pollutant”.

Mauget—Environmental effects: Toxic to aquatic invertebrates.

Maxforce pest control—Health effects: Harmful if ingested.
Environmental effects: Toxic to fish, aquatic invertebrates, and birds.

Mecomec—Health effects: None available. **Environmental effects:** May harm plants other than target plants.

Microcare—Health effects: Acute oral toxicity. **Environmental effects:** Toxic to birds, fish, and other wildlife.

Ornamec—Health effects: “Causes skin irritation. Causes serious eye irritation. Mayb cause genetic defects. May cause cancer. May be fatal if swallowed and enters airways.” May harm blood-forming system and bone marrow. **Environmental effects:** “Toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects.”

P.C.Q.—Health effects: No information available. **Environmental effects:** No information available.

Phantom—Health effects: Corrosive to skin.

Precor 2000—Health effects: None listed. **Environmental effects:** Toxic to aquatic environments.

pyrocide 300—Health effects: Eye irritant, skin irritant, dermal sensitizer, carcinogenicity in rats (thought to be irrelevant to humans). **Environmental effects:** “Toxic to fish and other wildlife.”

sedgehammer—Health effects: Moderate eye irritant. **Environmental effects:** Highly toxic to algae.

talstar—Health effects: Eye and skin irritant. **Environmental effects:** Highly toxic to fish and aquatic arthropods. Degrades slowly in soil.

Termidor—Health effects: No information available. **Environmental effects:** “Do not discharge product into the environment without control.”

tempo ultra—Health effects: “Slight transient neurobiological effects.”
Environmental warnings: “Do not apply this product or allow it to drift to blooming crops or weeds if bees are visiting the treatment area.”

ULD: Health effects: Limited information available. **Environmental effects:** No information available.

*Note: Most pesticides are glyphosates, which are harmful to pollinators’ and human and animal health.

Our school garden does not use pesticides, and the district is letting its grass die to save water, so I think the main place that pesticides are used are on our dirt fields.

- **Talk to the groundskeepers or facilities managers to gain more information.**
- **Are there any native, non-neonicotinoid treated plants on campus? Where does the school source plants?**

My school does not have any ornamental plants that are regularly maintained (only a few trees that were planted a long time ago).

- **Where could you grow more native, drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly plants free of neonicotinoids? What are alternative methods that you could use on campus instead of pesticides?**

We could grow more native, drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly plants where we currently have dying lawn, or in planters around trees. Instead of pesticides, the district could hire manual laborers to uproot the weeds and grasses that grow in our fields or diseased plants. In terms of rodent control, they could place traps on the roofs of the school to entrap rodents physically. For pest management (like cockroaches and ants), they could increase hygiene on campus to prevent these pests!

- **Write up a report of your investigative experience. What did you learn?**

The San Diego School District pleads safe and prides itself on programs that produce healthy kids. However, both safety and health are disregarded in the face of bugs. The district authorizes use of about 16 pesticides and herbicides, and health effects of exposure range from skin irritation to cancer. And while the district doesn't use neonicotinoids, many of the pesticides above are glyphosates, which are extremely poisonous to bees as

well. Furthermore, while parents can opt to be notified 72 hours before pesticides are sprayed, there is no emphasis on how important this service is as the district claims the pesticides to be “safe.”

- **Were you surprised by your findings?**

Unfortunately, I was not surprised by my findings. I expected that the district would use some pesticides, though I suppose I was surprised to see that ant and rodent poison were also accepted.

- **How will you incorporate pollinator-friendly habitats into your campus or life going forward?**

I’m hoping to work with our school garden leader and possibly begin a pollinator friendly patch of the garden with her!

- **What actions can you take to start a campaign to create a more pollinator friendly campus?**

I think the best way is to eliminate pesticides—however, this would require a lot of lobbying and I would likely encounter a lot of resistance. So, I think another good way is to create a pollinator-friendly garden that is free of pesticides.

Day 11: Hemp

My Creation:

I like to sing, so I decided to write a song. I didn't know how to play ukulele before today (and even now, all I know are the chords that I used in the song), so I learned a new skill! I hope you like the song.

Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/6cvmoqf7sPc>

The Lyrics:

50,000 individual uses
For this magical crop
It can replace nonrenewable resources
So it's time for a big swap

Hemp contains less than 1% THC
it's not hallucinatory
Hemp can be made into shoes, tops, and bottoms
It's 50 times stronger than cotton

50,000 individual uses
For this magical crop
It can replace nonrenewable resources
So it's time for a big swap

Four times as much hemp as trees
Is grown in the same area, you see
It also requires no pesticides
It grows really quickly in the outdoors

Hemp also has an even greater benefit
For people with epilepsy
If other medications prove unfit
Hemp can make 'em seizure free

50,000 individual uses
For this magical crop
It can replace nonrenewable resources
So it's time for a big swap

Social Media:



Megan Phelps

5 mins · * ▼

Today, I learned enough chords (6) on the ukulele to write a song--about industrial hemp, of course! I'd love for you to take a look to hopefully learn a bit more about this amazing plant.



Project Green Challenge, Day 11: Hemp

Today, I wrote a song about a few of the benefits of hemp. I hope you enjoy it!

YOUTUBE.COM

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Write a comment...



Day 16: Fair Trade

GREENER

CHALLENGE

Here is your chance to find out about the faces behind the goods you buy.

- **Spend a few minutes browsing resources such as Fair Trade USA and Be Fair**
- **Read stories and watch videos about how fair trade has affected the lives of workers around the world**
- **Choose one person’s story to focus on and create a profile of this person**
- **Write 300 words about their story, including where they are from, what they do for work, and what they produce**

Johanna Quitiaquez is a worker in Ecuador at a fair trade certified rose farm called Hoja Verde. But she hasn’t always worked at Hoja Verde.

“We hardly ever got paid overtime,” she says of the conventional farm where she used to work. “And the farm wouldn’t provide us with health insurance,” she adds. Johanna’s tone is pragmatic, but it is clear that she doesn’t have fond memories of the farm.

But this fair trade certified farm is different. “They help us with everything, including paid maternity leave,” Johanna says, her voice changing with appreciation. Light from a nearby window illuminates her face.

The availability of onsite medical care that Hoja Verde provides likely saved Johanna’s life. When a routine medical exam showed signs of early stage cancer, Johanna received free treatment. She is certain that the farm where she used to work would not have provided her such vital services. “But, thankfully, everything turned out fine,” she says, smiling with gratitude. “I’m still here with you, I continue being here with you. And I continue to work.” She smiles more broadly.

Hoja Verde workers use the extra money from fair trade goods to establish a home loan fund, which provided Johanna with a loan of five thousand dollars to help her buy her own plot of land. She describes the home she will build, motioning to the browning brush as she beams.

“The house will be built over there. It will have two stories and a tile roof,” she says. “And right here will be the garden, where my children will play when I have more than the one I have now.” She gestures to a patch of land in front of her, gazing at it as if the garden were already there.

Johanna’s gratitude is apparent in her grin. Her face radiates happiness.

- **Include a photo or video of this person.**



(Skip to 4:47 to watch Johanna’s story.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcDozXTPmek>

- **Tell us why their story resonated with you and how it is related to fair trade**

Johanna's story resonated with me because it connects with all human rights issues very directly to environmentalism. Fair Trade is a certification process that encompasses the entirety of social justice, including women's rights, education, and a fair wage. It builds strong, resilient communities and empowers workers. Johanna's story was impactful because it showed how much working for a fair trade company transformed her life and benefitted her health. The shocking truth about her story was that Johanna would have died if she had not received the medical care that was available through the support of her fair trade farm.

- **Share three things you learned from researching fair trade workers**

1. Fair Trade is a certification process that ensures that workers receive medical care.
2. Fair Trade companies use premium funds for women's literacy programs, home loan funds, and first aid clinics.
3. Fair Trade ensures maternity, vacation, and sick leave—and guarantees workers their job back when they return.

Social Media Challenge

Upload your profile along with the photo or video of the individual to Instagram. Tag @TurningGreenOrg and @FairTradeUSA and use the hashtags #PGC2015 and #Wellness.



Megan Phelps

1 min · Edited · * ▾

Today's Turning Green Challenge was Fair Trade. Consider my eyes opened! I learned about how much Fair Trade USA impacts the lives of workers.

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Johanna's gratitude is apparent in her grin. Her face radiates happiness. (Skip to 4:47 to watch Johanna's story.) #PGC2015 #befair



The Skoll World Forum: Uncommon Heroes

In 2005, Paul Rice, TransFair USA President and CEO, was recognized with the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. The financial support that came...

YOUTUBE.COM

Day 18: Fashion
EXTRA CREDIT

CHALLENGE

- Host a film screening of *The True Cost* at your school, in an eco club meeting, or at home!
- Invite at least 3 friends/family/others to attend and ask everyone to wear their shirts inside out. Teach them why!

My dad had to work late the night that we scheduled this, so my mom and my grandpa and I watched it together. My dad is watching it as I type! My grandpa said, "I think my shirt looks better like this."

- After watching the film, do you have a new definition of "fast fashion"? If so, what is it? (maximum 80 words)

"Fast fashion" is a method of producing clothing that utterly disregards the wellbeing of *everyone* except the capitalist and the consumer. Fast fashion is an industry whose sole purpose is to make a profit, to increase wealth, even if it means violating someone's human rights to do so. This industry is based on a thirst for material items and a disregard for the harmful effects of this a method of production.

- Write down two new facts that you learned about the "fast fashion" industry and a major impact fast fashion has on people and the planet.
 1. Laborers are requesting \$120 per month, a request that is being denied because it is "too high."
 2. One woman was paid \$0.30 per day when she first began her job as a factory worker--and that's not uncommon.
 3. The clothing business is the second most pollution-causing industry, after oil.
 4. 250,000 farmers have committed suicide by ingesting pesticides after going into debt to pay for Monsanto's seed rights.

- Have a discussion with everyone who attended and write down the most memorable parts of the film for up to 10 people.

Derek: “The clothing business is the second behind fossil fuels in polluting the environment. The other thing reinforces is how capitalism and the pursuit of profit is the problem. A system that values profit above people.”

Jennifer: “250,000 farmers committed suicide using pesticides due to the Monsanto’s monopoly of the seed business, according Vandana Shiva.”

Megan: Members of a labor union for a factory were beaten and punched after requesting higher wages.

Jerry: The thing that he really liked about this film was how it “connected Genetically Modified Organisms and pesticide use with capitalism. [They aren’t just used] to make the world a better place.” My dad is committing to buy only fair trade clothing now.

- Host a film screening of *The True Cost* at your school, in an eco club meeting, or at home!

Social Media Challenge

Post a picture of your guests or a video interview clip at the event to Instagram or Facebook. Caption it with details about your event and one thing you learned about the fashion industry. Use the hashtags #PGC2015 and tag [@TurningGreenOrg](#), [@TrueCostMovie](#) and [@livia_firth](#) on Instagram or [@Turning Green](#) and [@The True Cost](#) on Facebook.

Continued below



megankphelps

1h



loveandfreckles and **gailshingler** like this

megankphelps I watched the [@truecostmovie](#) with my family, and was utterly astounded with the injustices of the fashion industry--but uplifted by people like [@livia_firth](#) who are bringing awareness and applying ethics to combat the horrible treatment of human beings who work in textile production. Thank you [@turninggreenorg](#) for raising my consciousness.

gailshingler And thank you [@megankphelps](#) for raising ours. I'm just a little afraid to watch this movie! ×

megankphelps [@gailshingler](#) you won't regret watching it! It is enlightening and impassioned. I think it will speak to your heart. ×



Add a comment...



Day 21: Teach

GREENEST

CHALLENGE

- Pick a space and time slot for your lesson (remember to get permission!)
- Invite an audience of 10 or more people - friends, classmates, professors, club members, etc.
- Include a visual element in your presentation. Think about what you can show that will capture attention and generate interest among the audience.

I brought in a jar of soil to convey my point about soil biodiversity. I also included a prezi (I edited the one I submitted for Greener Day 21). It can be found here:

http://prezi.com/yawljxtkvdim/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

- Develop a fun challenge so that participants have to do/speak/share in order to make it personal, relevant and memorable.

Throughout the presentation, I enlisted people to help create a poster based on facts we talked about during my presentation. At the end, everyone wrote down something they learned from the presentation. Tomorrow, I am going to post that creation on a wall at my school to educate others.



- Enlist a friend to video your presentation using a smartphone or video camera.

<https://youtu.be/jrvH2mhJruY>

Day 23: Sustainable Ag

GREENER

CHALLENGE

- Read about this Friends of the Earth project on the environmental impacts of conventional agriculture.
- Read the Center for Food Safety's FAQs about glyphosate and cancer risk.
- Share 5 things that you learned or surprised you from both readings.
 1. 300 million pounds of glyphosate is sprayed per year.
 2. Glyphosate is found in food, air, water, and rain.
 3. The EPA estimates that the amount of glyphosate infants are exposed to is five times the maximum amount recommended by independent scientists.
 4. Studies indicate that there is a link between non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and glyphosate.
 5. The US EPA relies on unpublished industry studies and does not assess epidemiology, and experiences pressure from companies that produce pesticides (it's less reliable than IARC).
- Write a few sentences with your thoughts on conventional agricultural practices and what you would like to see done differently.

Conventional agriculture is a way of farming fixated on efficiency. To create the maximum efficiency, farmers use pesticides, herbicides, genetically engineered organisms, and deforestation. The result is a lot of inexpensive food. But conventional agriculture is a method of cultivation that is focused solely on short-term gains.



Pesticides kill not just pests but bees, butterflies, and microbes in the soil. Herbicides are no better.



Genetic engineering promotes monoculture, which leads to more pesticides and herbicides. Monoculture also depletes soil quality (continuous cultivation of a single species of plant continuously pulls certain nutrients from the soil, and these nutrients are not restored) and promotes soil erosion.



Deforestation prevents carbon sequestration by removing trees that sequester carbon!



Conventional agriculture is stripping the Earth of the resources we need to sustain us. It is essential that we shift to more sustainable methods of agriculture, ones that revitalize the soil and air. It is imperative that we stop the use of pesticides, and begin crop rotation. It is vital to our ecosystems and (at the risk of sounding melodramatic) the human species that we support small farmers who practice sustainable agriculture. It's time for a food revolution.

Day 23: Sustainable Agriculture

GREENEST

THINK

Sustainable agriculture refers not only to growing healthy produce and animals, but also to how we sustain and steward land, natural resources, and the environment. Did you know that the Colorado River no longer flows all the way to the ocean? The amount of water taken from the river, primarily to irrigate farmland, has literally dried up this precious resource.

CHALLENGE

It's time to create change and make your own lexicon of sustainable agriculture!

- Research the environmental impacts of Big Ag (conventional farming), not limited to only meat and dairy production.
- Pick three terms that you feel encapsulate the impact of Big Ag on the environment.

1. Monoculture
2. Pesticides
3. Deforestation

- Write a short definition of each term and link to one news article, blog, published journal, etc. that speaks to it.

1. Monoculture—the cultivation of a single crop on a plot of land over long periods of time.

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/monoculture-crops-environment/>

2. Pesticides—hazardous chemicals that are used to eliminate pests and insects, but that also eliminate pollinators and biodiversity in the soil.

These chemicals also cause cancer and neurological problems in humans. <http://www.sustainabletable.org/718/pesticides-if-this-doesn-t-convince-you-nothing-will>

3. Deforestation—The continual elimination of a forest. In this sense, trees are removed to create more space for farmland.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/deforestation-and-global-warming/>

- Select three terms that you feel define sustainable farming and provide a short definition for each and link to one news article, blog, published journal piece, video etc.

1. Biodiversity—The coexistence of species together in an ecosystem, a coexistence that increases the well being of the ecosystem and organisms alike.

For a long read:

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/biodiversity_paia/PAR-FAO-book_lr.pdf

For a shorter read:

<http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/en/>

2. Organic—a method of agriculture that rejects the use of all pesticides and genetically engineered organisms.

<http://rodaleinstitute.org/regenerative-organic-agriculture-and-climate-change/>

3. Resource preservation—The conservation of resources for future generations.

<http://www3.epa.gov/region09/waterinfrastructure/agriculture.html>

(This article is about water conservation, but sustainable agriculture encompasses more resources than just water.)

- Check out *Lexicon of Sustainability's* series of information artworks.
- Make your own information artwork depicting sustainable ag. Be creative with what you have learned! You may take inspiration from *Lexicon* or other sources, but the artwork and content must be your own.

Continued on the next page.

Sustainable Agriculture

Carbon is sequestered from
the atmosphere
in the soil

air is free
of pesticides
and other
pollutants

workers earn
living wages

people are safe
from cancer-
causing chemicals

crops are
rotated to
deter pests

pollinators
are protected
from harmful
pesticides

soil is biodiverse
with microbes and
nutrients

water remains free
of harmful pesticides

water
is used
sustainably

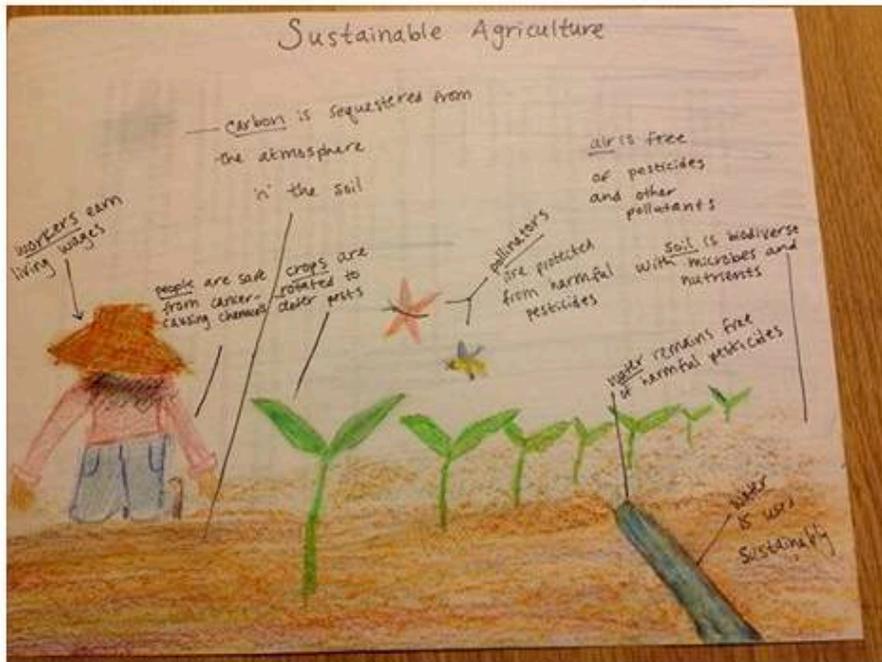




Megan Phelps

Just now · * ▾

Here's a scary thought: we currently have only 60 years left of soil. That is, we have 60 years before we run out of arable soil. This is because pesticides and monoculture have destroyed the balance of organisms within soil. Soil is a nonrenewable resource (since it takes 500 years to create 1 inch of topsoil!). Sustainable agriculture is the answer. Learn more from this little drawing I made, or from the [Lexicon of Food](#). #PGC2015



Like

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Write a comment...



Day 27: Global Citizen

GREENER

THINK

From organic to water and fair trade to fashion, we've introduced you to a diverse and far-reaching set of challenges facing our planet at this moment in time. But, what has had the largest impact on your perception of the world? Today's the day to take action on that issue as the global citizen that you are.

CHALLENGE

- Of all the challenges you've done so far, pick one that really stopped you in your tracks. Perhaps it tapped into an interest you never knew you had, or led you to changes you didn't know you could make.
- Which challenge did you pick, and why? How did it impact your life, and how will it continue to impact you going forward?

The challenge that impacted me the most was sustainable agriculture. This challenge combined the concepts of organic, non-GMO, biodiversity, water, and local into a comprehensive outline of the things we need to do to heal the environment. Now, when I shop for food, I can lucidly envision all the environmental effects of what I'm consuming. Also, I am truly mesmerized with soil! With this new information, I hope to educate people (by going into our local elementary schools, and putting on presentations for adults) about the importance of soil conservation and sustainable agriculture as a whole.



Soil rocks!

- List three ways this issue affects people and cultures around the world. What people and/or cultures are most affected?

1. Unsustainable agriculture can cause starvation in developing countries with little arable land.
 2. People everywhere are affected by carbon in the atmosphere, which could be mitigated by revitalizing soils (which are an important carbon sink). However, studies project that people living in poverty are most affected by climate change.
 3. People all over the world are affected by decreasing nutritional value of food due to depleted soil quality.
- Find an organization anywhere in the world that is advocating for change around the issue you identified. Tell us the name of the organization, their website, and mission.

The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) is working for sustainable agriculture. <http://www.fao.org/home/en/> They state, “Our three main goals are: the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and, the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.”



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

- Share two initiatives that this organization is working on that inspire you.

The FAO is working on so many projects that inspire me. One is the Global Soil Partnership. Another is the Fight Against Desertification.

- How does it feel to know that there are people around the world who share your same passion?

It feels so affirming! I feel empowered to take a stand when I know so many others are pushing for the same cause. Sometimes I feel a little

isolated as a “radical,” but knowing that there are others in the world who share my passion makes me feel like I’m part of a community. It’s also very grounding to get other like-minded people’s perspective on the best way to approach a problem in the world.

- Find a contact for that organization, and send them an email with why they inspire you.

Global Soil Partnership

 **Megan Phelps** <megastar.phelps@gmail.com> 7:13 PM (6 minutes ago) ☆  

to FAO-partnershi. 

Dear Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Megan Phelps, and I am a 16-year-old student from San Diego, California.

I am emailing you to express how much your information about soils impacted me. I am a committed environmentalist, and so I have always been enthusiastic about solving issues like plastic pollution, pesticide use, and air pollution.

But before I explored the wealth of information found on your "Soil Portal," I had not truly thought about the importance of soil to life. I've never felt so impassioned as I feel now about the state of our soils.

I am so grateful for all the information I had access to through your website, and I feel so inspired by your work on the issue of soil depletion.

Do you see a way that I could contribute to your Global Soil Partnership? I feel strongly about this issue, as you do too, and I would love to help in any way I can.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Megan

Day 29: Hero

GREENER

THINK

There are extraordinary people all over the world who have stepped up against all odds, their voices were all it took to start a movement, or make a change or to just be there for others. This is the power of one!

CHALLENGE

- Peruse the internet, look around you, who is a person that you might want to emulate in your own life and introduce them to us.

It wasn't until recently (when I joined this challenge) that I learned about Erin Schrode, environmental activist and to-the-core good person. I've been following her accounts of her work to help Syrian refugees, and I admire her whole heart, not just her passion for sustainability. I am so genuinely inspired by her that I just had to share.

However, I know that this she is likely a common selection among PGC Challengers! So, I decided to make my profile on a different individual, Beth Terry. I also find Beth incredibly inspiring, because of her commitment to making the world a better place by eliminating plastic in her everyday life (and inspiring other to do the same). I think her work is powerful in changing the way people consume plastic.

- Approach this challenge as if you were writing a blog or a story for your campus newspaper, for the New York Times or for your favorite blog.
 - Share the name of your hero and a photo
 - Tell us their story in 500 words max: where they're from, what they have accomplished, what challenges and obstacles did they face, and why you were drawn to them



Beth Terry hasn't always been an environmental activist. But while recovering from a surgery in 2009, she read an article that changed her lifestyle. Entitled, "The Oceans are Turning Into Plastic...Are We?" the article displayed a picture of a sea bird filled with trash.

Beth had found her passion.

The week following the discovery of her article, Beth decided to reject all new plastic. She soon slid down the slippery slope of eliminating her plastic. All of it.

Well, not *all* of it. Beth still produces plastic. But in 2011, her plastic waste—including all recyclable plastic—was 2% of the average American's.

But she wasn't content to settle for a plastic free life all by herself. Beth had a passion, and she soon decided to share it to the world. So, she started the blog, "Fake Plastic Fish." This quirky name has since been changed to "My Plastic Free Life," and she published a book with the same title.

But her fiery dedication doesn't stop there. Located in Oakland, California, Beth is open to giving presentation, keynote speeches, workshops, and more to provide information to the public and combat the excessive consumerism that is degrading our environment.

She's so open, in fact, that she provides her cell phone number on her website to encourage people to get educated. In her lighthearted humor, she says, "Yep, you'll get me in person. It's just easier that way."

Her blog has countless resources for people looking to reduce their plastic waste. Beth updates it with information and stories that give readers an inside view into the plastic-free world.

And looking through the articles, it's clear that a plastic free world is one of the best kinds of world.

But her journey to plastic-free is not always easy. Beth admits that she misses flatbreads and tortillas that are packaged in plastic. Reading through the reviews to her book on Amazon, it is clear that not everyone is as supportive as one would expect them to be.

Beth's spark and commitment to a plastic-free life is not just inspiring. It's revolutionary, and admirable. Beth's spirit is making the world a better place.

- o What did you learn from their experience

I learned that a person doesn't have to be perfect to be a hero. Beth is so amazing because she admits to her challenges. Her humor provides a sense of positivity that often doesn't accompany the intense environmentalists that I often read about.

- o If you were to meet this person, what would you tell them about how they have impacted you?
- o What are three questions you would ask your hero?

1. What is your favorite way to spend your free time?
2. What is the most urgent issue my generation will have to deal with?
3. What's the best way to inspire change in my community?

- o See if you can find an email address for your hero and tell them how they have inspired you.

 **Megan Phelps** <megastar.phelps@gmail.com> 12:04 AM (0 minutes ago) ☆  

to info ▾

Dear Beth,

My name is Megan Phelps, and I am a 16-year-old environmentalist from San Diego, California.

I wanted to email you to let you know of how much your commitment to plastic reduction inspires me. I so admire your passion, and all your work to create an enlightened and educated world.

I am truly encouraged by all the work you do to make the world a better place. The plastic problem is overwhelming, but I am so glad that there are people like you that are combatting it.

Thank you!

Best,

Megan