

Toward a Greener World; Toward a Greener Iowa

Iowa Environmental Council Annual Conference

October 15, 2010

Scottish Rite Consistory, Downtown Des Moines

8 a.m. to 4:30 (members meeting follows)

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration
- 8:30 a.m.** Opening: Marian Riggs Gelb, Executive Director,
[Iowa Environmental Council](#)
- 9:00 a.m.** *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*
Bill McKibben
- 10:30 a.m.** Break
- 11:00 a.m.** *Rural Iowa Air Quality*
Jim Merchant
- 12:00 p.m.** Mark Langgin – [Iowa's Water and Land Legacy](#)
a grassroots coalition of conservationists, sportsmen, environmentalists, community leaders, and businesses committed to creating an accountable and sustainable source of funding for natural resources and outdoor recreation
- 12:15 p.m.** All Iowa Lunch
- 1:00 p.m.** Video: Conservation Conversations–Iowa Farmers' Perspectives
- 1:40 p.m.** *Revisoning the Corn Belt*
Joan Nassauer
- 2:45 p.m.** Break
- 3:00 p.m.** Panel Discussion: *The Way Forward:
Developing a shared vision for a sustainable Iowa landscape*
Facilitator: Lois Wright Morton
- 4:25 p.m.** Closing – Marian Riggs Gelb
- 4:30 p.m.** Annual Meeting for Members

Presentation Descriptions

OPENING: 15 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Presenter: Marian Riggs Gelb, Executive Director, Iowa Environmental Council

KEYNOTE: EAARTH; MAKING A LIFE ON A TOUGH NEW PLANET

Presenter: Bill McKibben, Author, *Eaarth: Making Life on a Tough New Planet* and
DEEP ECONOMY: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future

Humans have altered the earth so much that Bill McKibben thinks it needs a new name. "We'll need to change to cope with the new Eaarth we've created ... and in the process, with many others fighting similar battles, we'll help build the architecture for the world that comes next, the dispersed and

localized societies that can survive the damage we can no longer prevent,” says Bill McKibben in his new book: ***Eaarth; Making a Life on a Tough New Planet***.

“New planets require new habits,” says McKibben. Business as usual cannot be sustained. Demand for fossil fuels is rising, while supplies are not. Many of our essential resources are in decline: air, climate, water, our ecosystems, soil, fish stocks. And our economy and security are facing increasing risks. To preserve our natural resources, to ensure our security and to prepare for this emerging world we need to re-localize—commerce, food, energy systems and more. Using less energy more efficiently must be a part of every community, building and farm design. And we need to start now, so as life with less fossil fuel becomes a reality, we not only survive, we thrive.

At the Iowa Environmental Annual Conference, McKibben will chronicle these events and demonstrate how innovative, proactive individuals and groups can and are embracing more desirable and resilient food and energy systems, and more creative and conscious ways of living.

RURAL IOWA AIR QUALITY

Presenter: James A. Merchant, DrPh

Dr. Merchant, currently a professor of environmental health and pulmonary medicine, served as the first dean of the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa, from 1999 to 2008. He is a nationally known expert on occupational and environmental health, rural health, and public health policy.

The impacts on the health of those living near industrial farm animal production facilities have increasingly been the subject of research. Dr. Merchant will share research findings regarding fine particle pollution from agriculture, rural asthma, and the relationship between confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and health effects. Rural air pollution in the form of greenhouse gases, methane and certain odor and other emissions are also a part of his topic.

Dr. Merchant, who served as a Pew Commissioner for a 2-year study of Industrial Farm Animal Production, will share the consensus recommendations of the Commission. This was a project of the Pew Charitable Trusts and John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, which resulted in the 2008 report entitled: *Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Animal Production in America*.

IOWA'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY

Presenter: Mark Langgin, Campaign Manager, Iowa's Water and Land Legacy

Iowa voters will have a historic opportunity on November 2, to vote in support of a Constitutional amendment establishing a trust fund to preserve Iowa's natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Trust fund revenue will aid in conservation of agricultural soils and improve water quality and natural areas in Iowa, including parks, trails, and fish and wildlife habitat. Langgin will answer audience questions about the trust fund and tell us how Iowans can help get out the vote.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE FARM PRACTICES – IOWA FARMER'S PERSPECTIVES (FILM)

In her book, *From the Corn Belt to the Gulf*, Joan Nassauer says that unintended societal and environmental costs can be avoided in the future if policymakers are able and willing to anticipate the consequences of new technologies and policies. That means that policy advocates, like the Iowa Environmental Council, must work together with farmers and others to understand why current farm policies are not resulting in desired outcomes and how policy advocates, farmers and others can work together to support a vision for agriculture that creates robust rural livelihoods AND healthy ecosystems. As one of our first steps towards this goal of working together, the Iowa Environmental Council invited five Iowa conventional farmers to share with us their challenges and successes when attempting to farm sustainably given current federal farm policy and under the current market pressures. This summer, farmer interviews were recorded and made into this video presentation.

REVISIONING THE CORN BELT

Presenter: Joan Nassauer

Author of *From the Corn Belt to the Gulf*; professor at School of Natural Resources and Environment University of Michigan

Is it possible to have a healthy U.S. agricultural economy, a healthy food supply, healthy rural communities, healthy agricultural ecosystems and healthy streams? Should we have to compromise any one of these environmental and societal goods to achieve another? Can this be achieved while the United States helps to feed the world, aims to achieve greater energy independence, and trades equitably with other nations? Can agricultural landscapes be reclaimed as desirable places to live and delightful places to visit? Is each of these a legitimate goal of federal agricultural policy? Joan Nassauer addressed all these questions in her research for the book, *From the Corn Belt to the Gulf*, using two watersheds in Iowa as the basis for her studies. She will share what she discovered at our annual meeting in October.

THE WAY FORWARD: DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE IOWA LANDSCAPE

Panel Moderator: Lois Wright Morton

Panel Members: To be announced

Assembled for our panel discussion will be five Iowa leaders with expertise and passion for a more healthy agricultural landscape and economy. They will be asked to talk about their responses to what they've heard from today's speakers and the video regarding the Iowa agricultural landscape and their vision for Iowa. We will pose questions to them, which encourage them and the audience to explore solutions for getting to a healthier US agricultural economy, a healthy food supply, healthy rural communities, and healthy ecosystems and streams in Iowa.

MEMBERS MEETING-OPEN MIC

Members of the Council (that's everyone in attendance today!) will have the opportunity to pose questions to the staff and board of directors.