


**Message from Michael Crow**

Real Video (10:37) 

Quicktime Video (10:37) 

**State of the Planet**

On May 13th and 14th, we will have the State of the Planet conference. What we're hoping to achieve there is to produce a number of sound recommendations related to sustainability science. Recommendations that we can get into the Johannesburg World Summit meeting in the fall, the Rio Plus Ten meetings. We're hoping that everyone will have a chance to participate in these important programs.

**Jeffrey Sachs**

The way that we became engaged with Jeffrey Sachs is through Joel Cohen, one of our leading faculty members here (at The Earth Institute) and Rockefeller University, who spent a year on leave at Harvard. During that year, Joel and Jeff worked on a range of big questions and had a lot of discussions. And in that, Jeff began to realize that the folks at Columbia, working through The Earth Institute, we're really tackling big questions in a transdisciplinary kind of way.

Jeff Sachs is one of the leading economists in the world. He's focused a lot of his time and his energy on thinking about how to make the world a better place, while most economists just focus on how to do better numbers, how to do econometrics, with the hope that those things will lead to a better world. Jeff knows that singular approaches are insufficient and in thinking about that insufficiency, he realized, I think significantly that economics had to be linked with science, if one hoped to build a sustainable economy and a sustainable ecosystem. What he's realized is that while he's been working on a sustainable economy, he must work with those interested in the Earth and ecosystems and how they work. And it's the confluence of things coming together in those two areas that I think attracted him here.

**In the News**

**Nature** (03/21/02) Robin Bell, Michael Studinger, and Anahita Tikik, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, co-authored an article entitled "Origin and fate of Lake Vostok water frozen to the base of the East Antarctic ice sheet." [\(more\)](#)

**NPR's Talk of the Nation/Science Friday show** (03/29/02) Tony Barnston, International Research Institute for Climate Prediction, was among those interviewed on how climate changes affect and cause drought.

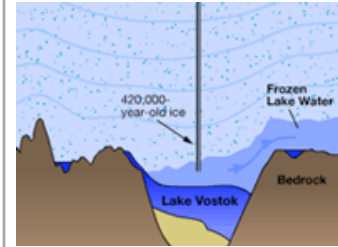
**U.S. News & World Report** (04/01/02) Arnold Gordon, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, was cited in an article entitled "Perilous Waters – A climate surprise may be brewing in the North Atlantic."

**USC** (04/12/01) The 2002 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement was awarded to Wallace Broecker of Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and Tungsheng Liu of the Chinese Academy of Science. [\(more\)](#)

**The Los Angeles Times** (04/21/02) Won Young Kim, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, was cited in an article on the 5.1 earthquake that rattled parts of New York State . Story also reported by The Associated Press and Newsday.

**The Daily Yomiuri - Tokyo** (04/23/02) Roberto Lenton, International Research Institute for Climate Prediction, was interviewed on the role of IRI in addressing El Niño and emphasized the importance of partnerships to utilize scientific predictions for the benefit of society.

**The New York Times** (04/25/02) Reported on an interview with The Earth Institute's new director, Jeffrey Sachs. There is a kind of old-fashioned universality to The Earth Institute, Dr. Sachs said. Although the components are technical, from geology to social science, a common thread connects them all to the idea that human activity and the life of the planet are intertwined

**Outcome****On the web**

A picture tells a thousand words, and provides another source for understanding complicated scientific discoveries. Webmaster Ravi Rajakumar and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory researcher Robin Bell worked together on this animation about her work to find other routes to reach the bacterial treasures of Lake Vostok.

[See the animation.](#)

News: Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs, One Of The World's Leading Economists, Will Head Columbia Earth Institute. [\(more\)](#)

**CEI:** Since the new web design was implemented last fall, the number of visitors has doubled, with more than half arriving from non-Columbia sites. Both the [education](#) pages and the [Calendar of Events](#) are among the most popular pages, so send your events listings to [ceievents@ldeo.columbia.edu](mailto:ceievents@ldeo.columbia.edu) to ensure that their visibility to the Earth Institute community. The full statistics can be seen [here](#).

**Q&A**

**Geoffrey Heal**, Garrett Professor of Public Policy and Corporate Responsibility at the Graduate School of Business, heads the latest emerging center at The Earth Institute, an interdisciplinary enterprise that brings together natural, biological and social scientists focusing on Earth systems science.

**Q: What's the role of economics in The Earth Institute?**

### New projects: Ceará, Brazil

There's a state in northeast Brazil called the state of Ceará. Ceará has a tremendous planning challenge, and that is that climate has the most disruptive effect on their ability to plan their economy and to stabilize their economic growth. A team of Columbia climatologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and others recently entered into an arrangement, whereby Ceara will become a member of IRI, the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction, here at Columbia, in The Earth Institute. The IRI will now become a critical element in developing new kinds of decision-making tools for that region of Brazil, tackling their very difficult planning issues.

For the next few months, I'm going to be focusing my energy on helping to develop some new faculty roles in areas where The Earth Institute can be strengthened. I'll be working with Jeff Sachs to get up to speed in the movement of The Earth Institute to the next level of intellectual attainment. I'm going to really focus a lot of energy on shoring up those 8 or 10 things that are in the incubation phase, and also spending a great deal of time on helping Biosphere achieve the next step in its own evolution.

[Michael Crow \(mc71@columbia.edu\)](mailto:mc71@columbia.edu)

### Save the Date

05/05/2002 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM  
[2002 LDEO Public Lectures Series](#)  
Professor Steven Goldstein, Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences

05/11/2002 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
[Earth2Class/Saturday Workshops for Educators](#)  
Upmanu Lall, International Research Institute for Climate Prediction

05/13-14/2002  
[State of the Planet Conference](#) Preceding the [World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg](#) in late-August, the second State of the Planet conference will explore 'Science and Sustainability' through issues of global food security, conservation of biological resources, and urban sustainability.  
Registration required.  
<http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sop2002>

### Comments and Suggestions

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*When IRI climate scientist Jennifer Phillips arrived in the mountains of Machakos, Kenya, in late February, the first question she heard from the farmers was whether there might be an El Niño event this year, and what might that mean for them. Phillips also encountered local journalists starting up an organization aimed at helping the public understand and learn how to respond to climate information. [\(more\)](#)*

### Profiles: An Emerging CEI Unit

[The Center for Economy, Environment & Society](#)

Columbia University has established The Center for Economy, Environment & Society, where environmental economists study the interaction between natural and economic systems with a focus on renewable and non-renewable resources, pollution management and sustainability. Headed by Geoffrey Heal ([see Q&A](#)), the Center's faculty group includes three other economists who work on environmental issues: Joshua Graff Zivin (Public Health and Medicine), Alexander Pfaff (Economics, SIPA and the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation,) and Arthur Small (SIPA and Earth Institute). Other participating faculty are Prajit Dutta (Economics), Marc Henry (Economics and Statistics), Giulio Pontecorvo (Professor Emeritus at the Business School) and Rajiv Sethi (Barnard Economics).

Scholars will focus on developing a Ph.D. program in environmental economics, and delve into research about: the economics of climate change, management of greenhouse gases, environmental risk management, the economic aspects of conservation, socially and environmentally responsible investing, and the environmental and social responsibility of corporations. [\(more\)](#)

### Education



The Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology (E3B) was created to expand the University's capacity for research and training in the natural sciences, focusing on levels of biological integration from organisms to ecosystems. E3B offers degree programs, a [B.A. in Environmental Biology](#), an [M.A. in Conservation Biology](#), and the [Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolution](#) linking studies of ecology, evolutionary biology, and biological diversity to relevant social science fields like economics, policy, and anthropology. All include opportunities for field and laboratory research. The department also offers graduate [certificate programs](#) that enhance cross-disciplinary training in environmental sciences, one in Environmental Policy (for students with a biological background), and another in Conservation Biology (for students with a social science background). Faculty include many from related units at Columbia, and those whose main appointments as senior scientific staff are at the American Museum of Natural History, the

A: Economics is central to any attempt to transform science into policy. Economics is the filter through which science has to pass to affect policy, the language that converts science to policy. Neat science, clever science, does not necessarily make good policy. Policy-making has to take into account the full repercussions of an action, wherever and whenever they may occur. And it has to make tradeoffs between different goals. The consequences of economic policies are often not at all obvious and sometimes what looks like an obvious way of promoting environmental conservation can in fact be very counterproductive because of its indirect consequences. Economics focuses on indirect consequences and on tradeoffs.

### Q: What does sustainability mean to an economist?

A: Sustainability is an elusive concept. There are two points that are the essence of sustainability - one is taking account of the interests of future generations and the second is noting the constraints that natural systems impose on human activities and the consequences for present and future human welfare of violating these constraints. It is probably more productive to talk directly in terms of these two underlying problems than it is to talk about sustainability, because then it is clear what we are talking about. Too often people use sustainability as a general term of approbation without any specific operational meaning.

