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Peer reviewed

The Ecocruiser

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The author's intent in this column is to briefly highlight electronic resources on environmental topics. While the focus will be on Internet resources, there will be an occasional look at non-net resources.

In each Ecocruiser column, I try to feature a few sites of interest to environmentalists and activists and to critique these sites for an academic and professional audience. The [Eco-Compass](#), a monthly newsletter courtesy of environmentally-focused publisher Island Press, is also aimed at this audience. While all issues feature web sites, many issues have also included gopher and FTP sites, electronic mailing lists and newsgroups, other e-newsletters and journals and a calendar of events. Each Eco-Compass issue addresses an emerging environmental topic, briefly describing and linking to the best sites related to that topic. Topics covered in recent issues have been sustainable communities, biodiversity and ecosystems management. The Directory of Sites Featured in Eco-Compass is an up-to-date alphabetical listing of all the sites which have been featured in issues of the newsletter. It is also possible to subscribe to Eco-Compass directly and receive it via email by sending a request to Majordomo@igc.apc.org, leaving the subject blank and in the body writing: subscribe islandpress-l. This has been a useful service, and let's hope that what began as an energetic, regular monthly has not run out of steam; after nine consecutive monthly issues from May 1995 to January 1996, the publication schedule seems to have switched to a bimonthly schedule for the two most recent issues.

From Maui in Hawaii comes the periodical [Our Environment - Online](#). The third and most recent issue in December 1995 marked the end of the first year of this publication. The focus of the issue was, appropriately for the location of the site, the extinction of various species in Hawaii, several short pieces on the dangers to native Hawaiian species, and what is being done and what can be done. There is also a page of links to other endangered species resources on the web. The previous issue was devoted primarily to Internet resources on global warming. The first issue is currently only available via downloading as a zipped file, which makes it somewhat cumbersome to review. Also included in each issue is

the feature News, Views, & Updates, a periodic review of the environmental press. The only person identified in either of the two issues online is Jeff Stark, who is listed as the publisher. While the viewpoints and commentaries provided are balanced and interesting, its seeming one-person operation is a recipe for a short life. I hope I am wrong, and that there will be continuance of this publication long into the future, because what is there is worthwhile reading. Since neither of the two issues that are online seem to take up much computer space, I wonder why the first issue has not also remained available in a less cumbersome form.

You get two for one when you connect to [Eco Travels/El Planeta Platica](#) in Latin America. Both sites are maintained by Ron Mader, a free-lance journalist, and there is a great deal of interweaving between the two, where links from Eco Travels lead to articles from El Planeta. In Mader's words, El Planeta Platica (The Earth Speaks), a quarterly now in its third volume, strives to provide environmental news and information for the conscientious traveler. Contributed feature articles focus on travel to exotic locations, with an occasional article on an environmental problem, like one recently on the bends in exploited divers of the Mosquito Coast. Travel and environmental news briefs are supplied mainly by the Tropical Conservation Newsbureau. Mader himself supplies a goodly number of book reviews in each issue. Other useful features are columns on Resources: Magazines, Maps and other Goodies and Travel Opportunities. Eco Travels in Latin America is so diverse in coverage of these areas that it is impractical to do justice to all of it. Links to eco-travel destinations of Mexico, the Borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico, the Sonoran Desert, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, and the Amazon lead to articles on specific destinations within those areas and their ecological significance. These articles may be from El Planeta Platica or from Mader's own extensive writings. There are bibliographies, other lists of publications, travel, environmental and political contacts, and extensive links to other resources about the areas. Bibliographies maintained by Mader include the Ecotourism Bibliography, Mexico Bibliography, US/Mexico Border Environment Bibliography, Central America Bibliography, South America Bibliography, Maya Bibliography, Amazon Bibliography, and the Ecuador Bibliography. There are groupings of articles, quotations, contacts, and linked resources for the ecotravel topics of Environmental Technologies, Travel Library (Reviews), Resources for Journalists/Periodistas, Oil & Industry, and Coffee & Agricultural Issues. Recipes by Melissa Briggs, which are featured in issues of the newsletter, are collected in La Olla Latinoamericana (Recipes) along with links to other sources of recipes for regional cookery. Anyone with even the slightest interest in these areas is going

to be well-rewarded with a trip to this site.

Each bimonthly issue of [Conscious Choice](#) comprises a number of mostly prescriptive articles organized around a unifying theme. In the May/June 1996 issue, the theme "A Sense of Place" is related by articles advising you how to get to and stay in touch with your environment. The previous issue, "You Are What You Eat," examined food and nutritional choices and dangers. Separate from the issues are bimonthly feature articles. The most recent, "Cannibal Cows may threaten U.S. Food Supply," warns of the potential for a breakout of Mad Cow Disease in the U.S. Also appearing bimonthly are several features or columns:

- News of the Earth, which consists mainly of a political editorial with several short newsclips tacked on at the end;
- Legislative Action, which surveys recent government involvement in environmental affairs and invites contact with governmental agencies and representatives on these affairs;
- The Holistic M.D., which typically examines health problems;
- Eco Surf, which has short reviews of environmentally related web sites;
- Veggie Links, with reviews of vegetarian web sites;
- Book Reviews, a number of short reviews all contributed by Christine Carr;
- Music Reviews, with excellent reviews of recent recordings from around the world by Richard Klecka. Inquiries about print subscriptions can be made to cc@consciouschoice.com. The general articles, though usually well-written, are fairly similar to those encountered in other ecoconscious publications, leading to deja vu for this reviewer, but the feature articles and columns are worthwhile.

[U.S. Water News Online](#) is mainly a commercial site, a spinoff of the print U.S. Water News, but it does provide timely news articles about water in both the News department, which offers a couple current news articles sectioned under each of the headings for Front Page News, Water Quality, Water Conservation, Water Supply, Policy and Legislation, Litigation and Water Rights, and Global Water Front, and in the Archives, which lists past news articles under the same categories which are arranged by month in two sections covering January - May 1996 and April - December 1995. Free sample issues of the printed magazine are

available toll-free at 800-251-0046.

Available from the home page of the [Environmental and Societal Impacts Group \(ESIG\)](#) of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) is the quarterly Network Newsletter, which is jointly sponsored by ESIG and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Each issue of the newsletter features an editorial, brief articles (which mainly report ongoing research activities of worldwide organizations in the areas of environmental, atmospheric and climate change) and sections devoted to new newsletters and journals, recent publications, announcements of upcoming meetings, summaries of past meetings, and job/fellowship opportunities. A [gopher version](#) of the newsletter is available. Also available from the ESIG home page are background information and descriptions from this organization on the use and value of climate and weather information, environmental change, climate change, mesoscale weather impacts, and statistical modeling.

A code that should be adopted by all humanity, the Code of Environmental Ethics and Conduct, which was produced by the Canadian Environment Network, can be found at the site of the [GreenLife Society of North America \(GLSNA\)](#). Overviews of four projects, the Shark Education Network, the Small Cetacean Project, the Desertification Project, and the Climate Change Project of the GLSNA can also be found here, with descriptions of the environmental problems, possible actions that can be followed to influence international law in these areas, and links to other resources. The Small Cetacean Project overview lists small cetaceans by common name and scientific name. Descriptions are also available of the monographs that the GLSNA publishes in the International Environmental Law/Policy Occasional Paper Series.

[The Green Lane](#) is the WWW extension of Environment Canada, an enviable government agency. Though still in development, the Green Lane is already packed with information, advice and programs for environmental action. The best of the Green Lane is grouped under 'What's Hot.' The best I can do for all that is here is to give samples from the various information collections. Action 21 offers programs, products, and information designed to get Canadians to take the actions needed to create and sustain healthy environments in their communities. One of these products is a recitation of various environmental success stories by region. Each region has developed their own group of stories, so some regions have nothing at all listed yet, but the Atlantic Provinces offer a rich set of success stories that are encouraging to read. Information provided by Action 21 includes the Green Tips, brief ideas for cutting back on environmentally unsound practices. The Water information

collection has extensive materials on the Nature of Water, on Water Policy and Legislation, and on the Management of Water. Included in the Nature of Water section are background papers on the different states of water (ice, liquid and vapor), how and in what forms those states appear in nature, and the significance of environmental damage on this life-supporting compound. Other information collections include the Canadian Biodiversity Information Network, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Ecosystem initiatives, the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, Environment Week, the Great Lakes Information Management Resource, Greening government, Heat, Storms & Smoke, News releases, Operation Irving Whale, State of the Environment Infobase, Public weather forecasts, and Toronto's nesting Peregrine watch. There's also Environment Canada's annual report for Parliament on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA, the Enviro tipsheet, the National Pollution Release Inventory and much more. The Green Lane, a treasure given to all of us by the Canadian government, will reward repeated visits.

That is all I have time for in this issue, but there is plenty more out there to explore and bring to your attention. I would be grateful to see your comments and suggestions about this column and its contents, so send me email at mikep@uidaho.edu.

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