



SUSTAINABLE
LEADERS
IN ACTION
SEPTEMBER 2021
Volume 2 • Issue 6

Saire

8/20/21



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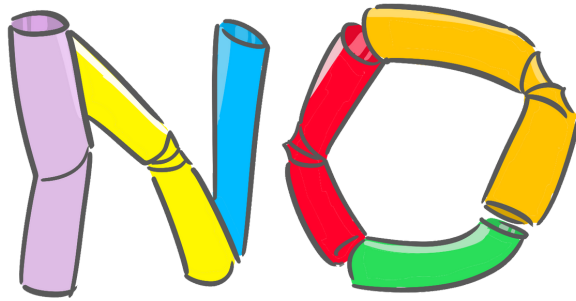
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SEPTEMBER ACTION OF THE MONTH: SAY



TO PLASTIC STRAWS

by Alison Chiu, art by Kyle Suen

For September, SLIA's AOTM is "Say No to Plastic Straws!" While this seems like a small action, it can really make a difference in our environment, and it can also have some serious health benefits. As of right now, it is estimated that the USA uses about 500 million plastic straws everyday, which clearly harms our environment as plastic can take hundreds of years to break down. Think about the waste we are producing! As most of us know, plastic straws can have extreme effects on animals, the earth, and ourselves. Additionally, alternatives provide more flexible options and health benefits than regular plastic straws do.

Plastic straws take a long time to decompose, sometimes taking up to 200 years to break down. Even then, lots of plastic straws just break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic that eventually make their way into the food and animals we consume. Throughout this whole process, chemicals are released into the air, soil, and water, which damages the world around us. Because of their lightweight nature, straws almost always end up in landfills because they cannot be recycled. Switching to an alternative may be a small action, but it can make a big impact in protecting and preserving our environment.

Some great alternatives to plastic straws include metal, silicone, bamboo, glass, and paper straws. There is a huge market of alternatives to plastic straws that not only give you a broader range of color, style, and variety than standard plastic straws do, but also provide multiple health benefits. For instance, plastic straws left out in the heat or used in hot drinks can leak the chemicals found in them, such as polypropylene and Bisphenol A (BPA) (both of which are found to be linked to the onset of puberty, obesity, and cancer). Even though BPA is now taken out of some plastic products, there are so many more advantages to using alternatives.

Altogether, switching from plastic straws to other alternatives is more beneficial to both the environment and yourself! These alternatives can be more personalizable, safe, and fun than plastic straws. While not everybody is able to fully stop or move away from using plastic straws, consider switching to an alternative when you are able to.

TAKE THIS ACTION WITH THE CLEANER CONTRA COSTA CHALLENGE!

1. Sign up for the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge [here](#)
 - a. The Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge is an online platform that makes it easy and fun to take sustainable actions by giving you helpful tips and free or low-cost resources for those actions
2. If you would like, create or join a team or community group to take action with others
3. Under the 'actions' tab found on the blue side bar, find the action 'Say No to Plastic Straws'
4. Complete actions to help the earth and earn points for your team or community group!



SLIA EXPLORES SEAWEED

by Abigail Stofer

In June, two groups of SLIA members had the unique opportunity to learn about seaweed and harvest some right from the source! One group went to the Berkeley Marina and one group went to Pescadero.

The Pescadero trip took place on June 15th, and our members had an early start, waking up at about 5am to get to the meeting point by 7am. Still a little sleepy-eyed, they met up with their guide, Tanya, who had them share a little bit about themselves and shared about herself in return. Tanya was the guide for both SLIA trips and is a cancer survivor who started leading these tours during COVID. She described the ethics and process of seaweed harvesting as well as her personal experience with incorporating seaweed into her diet. Once introductions were over, the group clambered down slippery rocks to access the seaweed groves and start harvesting.

They were instructed to look for three kinds of seaweed: turkish washcloth, a red coarse seaweed; iridescent seaweed, a red seaweed that looks like long strips of ribbon; and sea palm, an expensive and normally inaccessible brown seaweed that looks like a pom-pom. Members learned that Nori is the seaweed you typically see in the snack isles of grocery stores, what the different nutrients in red, green, and brown seaweeds are, and the best seaweeds for spa treatments (Turkish Washcloth) vs. cooking (Sea Palm). After filling bags full of seaweed, members got the opportunity to learn how to make three different dishes using the seaweed they had just harvested.

Alexi (our fabulous chair) said her favorite parts of this trip were getting to see some SLIA members in person for the first time and learning about the different types of seaweed. She is excited to impress her family members with this knowledge the next time she is at the beach! Similar to Alexi, Chloe mentioned that she enjoyed this experience because it allowed her to learn where she can find more kinds of seaweed besides the typical ones you find in stores and the interesting specifics about harvesting seaweed, like how you are required to have a license and that there are weight limits on how much you can take.

The Berkely group had a very similar experience to the Pescadero group, however, they did not partake in the cooking part. To these teenagers' dismay, they also had an early start (arriving at 5:30am in order to make low tide).

Though it was cold and the rocks were quite treacherous at times, Rachel said that she enjoyed getting to harvest the versatile plant with her friends. During the trip, the fact that surprised her the most is that a seaweed called Sargassum is able to counteract radioactivity in a person's body when consumed. In fact, having a diet consisting mainly of Sargassum was the reason that workers who cleaned up the aftermath of Hiroshima were able to stay alive!

While living in California, it is easy to take for granted that the mountains or ocean (take your pick) are only a short car ride away. This trip was an opportunity for our members to take advantage of the accessibility of California's nature and learn about the many benefits and uses of seaweed. It was a true bonding experience that we will all look back upon fondly!

If you would like to support Tanya's business, you can contact her at:

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ALL ABOUT OATS!

by Brooke Abess, art by Riley McIntosh

Introduction

Over the years, oats have become a staple in many people's diets. Oats are not only affordable and easy to find but also extremely versatile. Although oats may seem plain and bland, they are actually quite the opposite when it comes to their sustainability! From the history of the oat to unique, oat-based recipes, this article will be your guide to learning all about oats!

History of the Oat

While oats have gotten particularly popular in the last few years, they have a much longer and more fascinating history than the aesthetic oatmeal bowls we see on social media. Originally, oat grass was considered a weed and used only for livestock consumption. In fact, ancient Romans believed that oats were diseased wheat. But with time, more and more people started warming up to oats and used them for medicinal purposes, particularly skin ailments. They are still used today, as seen in many lotions that contain oats. In around 1500 AD, Scandinavians began growing oat crops, presumably to make beer, but oatmeal itself originated in Scotland, and it became extremely popular throughout the country. Although other regions, such as England, were hesitant to turn the grain they used to feed livestock into food for humans, they eventually came around to it, and oats quickly gained popularity. Now, oats are used in recipes (not just oatmeal!), skincare, and livestock feed.

Oats and Sustainability

Besides having so many uses, another great benefit of oats is their sustainability! This is because they are a low impact crop and require significantly fewer resources than other crops and grains. Additionally, they have the ability to combat soil erosion, which is the displacement of the upper layer of soil that causes land infertility and increased pollution as sediment begins to clog nearby waterways.

When it comes to using oats to make plant-based milk alternatives, the sustainability facts only get better. When compared to the production of cow's milk, oat milk uses significantly less resources. For 200ml of cow's milk, there are about 0.60kg of greenhouse gas emissions, whereas 200ml of oat milk produces 0.18kg of greenhouse gasses. Oats also take up about 80% less land than the production of dairy milk requires. But the benefits of oat milk don't

only apply when compared to cow's milk, as it is still more environmentally friendly than other plant based milks. For example, almond milk requires an inordinate amount of water, and since about 80% of almonds are grown in California, the production only exacerbates California's droughts. When compared to soy milk, oat milk wins when it comes to land usage. Soy plantations have a large demand for space and happen to thrive in the Amazon rainforest. As a result, there has been significant deforestation in the Amazon in order to accommodate more soy plantations. Overall, oats require less water and space, and also produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions than other milks whether they come from cows or other plants. This, in combination with the other sustainability facts about oats, make them an environmentally friendly ingredient all around.

Fun Oat-based Products

While oatmeal is indeed a great use of oats, there is also a wide variety of more unique oat based products on the market. Here are a few popular plant and oat-based brands!

Oatly: As one of the first oat brands to gain widespread popularity, Oatly continues to expand their selection of oat-based products. Not only do they offer regular, barista style, and chocolate oat milks, they have expanded to make oat ice cream and yogurt in a wide variety of flavors!

Oat Haus: Previously known as Kween & Co, Oat Haus is the brand behind the "world's first oat-based spread." Their granola butter, which is an alternative to traditional nut butters, is a delicious and innovative oat-based product that tastes like granola. They have also expanded to produce vanilla, chocolate, and blueberry flavored granola butter spreads, alongside the original.

Minority Figures: Minority Figures has recently gained popularity through social media with their colorful cans decorated with fun drawings. In addition to their popular barista style oat milk, they also sell a variety of canned oat milk lattes in flavors such as matcha and chai.

Chobani Oat-Based: Although Chobani is typically known for their dairy products, they now also offer an expansive range of oat-based products! Chobani offers a variety of oat milks, oat-based yogurts, and even oat milk coffee creamer!



Purely Elizabeth: Purely Elizabeth utilizes plant-based superfoods in their products, most of which are oat-based. They offer many different flavors of granola and oatmeal, which are a great way to spice up some of the more traditional uses of oats.

Eclipse: Eclipse specializes in plant-based ice cream made from oats! This Berkeley-based company offers classic flavors like chocolate and vanilla, as well as some unique flavors like cookie butter and mango passionfruit.

Oat-based (and vegan!) Recipes

After learning more about oats, you might be interested in finding more ways to incorporate them into your meals! But don't worry, there are plenty of oat recipes other than oatmeal and granola. Here are some of my personal favorite oat-based recipes:

- [Banana Bread by From My Bowl](#)
- [Spicy Bean Burgers by Madeleine Olivia](#)
- [Strawberry Cheesecake Overnight Oats by Pick Up Limes](#)
- [Cinnamon Toast Crunch Granola by Veggiekins](#)
- [Banana Bread Baked Oats by From My Bowl](#)

Each of these blogs have plenty of other great oat recipes; these are just some of the highlights! After learning a bit more about oats, you should definitely consider incorporating them into your day, whether it be oatmeal or a fun new recipe!





Sustainable Fashion Brands



By Liezyl Ann Catahan, art by Riley McIntosh

Being environmentally friendly while shopping for clothes is always a struggle, especially with the use of fast fashion in the industry. A large majority of clothing brands are classified as fast fashion, a production method which not only pollutes the earth, but also affects the people working within the industry who are often mistreated and underpaid. These issues continue to affect us as we let these brands profit off our money while worsening the state of our planet. Fortunately, there are better options that not only help the environment but also give back to the planet. Here are five environmentally-friendly brands you can use as a possible alternative to your fast fashion filled closet.

1. Chnge

Chnge strives to make a major change to the fast fashion industry by working with factories that promote sustainability and proper safety practices for their employees. This company makes long-lasting clothes and uses 100% cotton and environmentally-safe fabrics, and they also create clothes that don't waste gallons upon gallons of water. Chnge also participates in other social campaigns and promotes them through clothing and threads that discuss women empowerment, protecting BIPOC groups, and much more.

2. Reformation

Women's fashion has been brought to another level with Reformation! Started in 2009, their mission is to bring sustainable clothing to everyone. They work to make clothing in safe factories with low-impact and recycled materials that help the planet. Reformation creates clothing for multiple types of occasions, from casual wear to wedding dresses! Though their price range is a little high, their clothing is made to last through many uses.



3. **Pact**

Say goodbye to thin, lousy underwear and say hello to Pact! Pact actively promotes the use of cotton in all their undergarments with a profitable price for women and men. They also sell other clothing that brings you back to the basics, like simple leggings and graphic tees. Aside from their clothing, they also have a donation program that lets you donate old clothes to nonprofit organizations for those in need.

4. **thredUP**

If you like to go thrift shopping, then this site is just for you! thredUP is an online thrift shop that sells a variety of clothes for women and kids. These clothes range from basic everyday wear to designer clothes for the fanciest parties. Their goal is to reuse clothes to the best of their ability and contribute to a more sustainable future for the world. This site is a great option for people who can only afford low budget clothing.

5. **Tentree**

Tentree is an amazing brand that finds ways to give back to the planet and believes in starting small when saving the environment. They plant 10 trees every time someone makes a purchase, hoping to make a big change in the environment's current state. Currently, they have planted over 25 million trees all around the world! Their clothing is also very soft and comfortable and made from organic cotton, recycled polyester, tencel, and hemp, which are all sustainable and strong. While their prices are moderate to high, these clothing options are perfect alternatives to switch out with other items in your closet.

These are just a handful of sustainable clothing brands; you can find many more through a simple internet search! An article about amazing sustainable alternatives has been written by [The Good Trade](#), which not only talks about the brand's organization but also the price range and styles of different clothing as well. You can also check out the app [Good on You](#), which shows different sustainable clothing brands and rates them according to sustainability, price range, and customer ratings.

While these brands might seem pricey, they can last extremely long because of the materials used and are a way to help out our planet's environment. You don't have to completely change out your wardrobe. Just consider slowly weeding out a few articles of clothing you no longer wear, donate them to an organization, and replace them with a more sustainable option! At the end of the day, what you do for the planet helps, regardless of how small or big the action is!

A BLUE SUPPLEMENT

TO THE GREEN NEW DEAL

By Stella Lin, art by Kyle Suen

Where the Green New Deal falls short
and what you can do to help

About the Blue New Deal

To understand the Blue New Deal, you must first understand the text it was named after: the Green New Deal.

In summary, the [Green New Deal](#) is a resolution introduced to Congress that calls for a reform of the US economy to simultaneously confront climate change and inequality. (See Abigail Stofer's "The Green New Deal Explained" in our [July Newsletter](#) for a more detailed look at the Green New Deal.) Although the Green New Deal is considered one of the most radical pieces of environmental legislation to date, many scientists and policymakers have pointed out that it overlooks the ocean, a crucial habitat and resource that requires legislative protection.

Because of this, marine biologists, conservationists, ocean farmers, and many others are calling for a Blue New Deal, a bill that would protect oceans and also leverage its resources to combat climate change (i.e. through offshore wind farms, regenerative ocean farming, etc.). In September 2019, these calls for a Blue New Deal caught the attention of Elizabeth Warren, who was then running in the election's Democratic primaries. As a result, Warren began advocating for a Blue New Deal in her presidential campaign.

In her [Blue New Deal](#), Warren promised to fulfill the demands of Blue New Deal advocates:



Rebuild the US blue economy (the economy related to marine and coastal resources)



protect and restore ocean/coastal habitats



expand offshore renewable energy



end offshore drilling

...and help the US prepare and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Although Elizabeth Warren dropped out of the presidential election in early 2020, the fight for a [Blue New Deal](#) isn't over. Below are some actions you can take to help protect our oceans!

Email your congressperson asking him/her to support the [Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020](#).

ACTION #1

The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, introduced in the House by Representative Grijalva in October 2020, is quite similar to the Blue New Deal. It calls for coastal conservation and restoration, the expansion of offshore wind and other marine energy, and promotes climate-ready fisheries.

(For a more detailed summary of the bill, check out this [fact sheet](#) from the House's Natural Resources committee.)



Here's how to email your congressperson:

1 Find your congressperson and their contact information

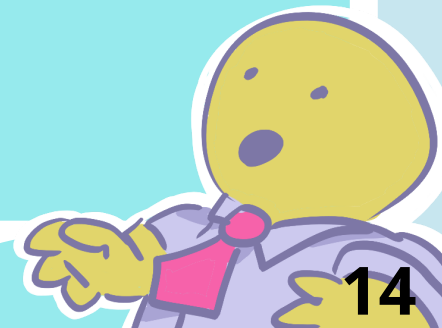
Simply go to this House of Representative [website](#) and input your zip code. It will tell you who your congressperson is and give you a link to their website. On your congressperson's website, find the contact information tab. Here, you should find their email.



2 Write your message!

Now's your chance to ask your congressperson to support the bill. Here are some tips to help you communicate your opinion clearly:

1. Be brief! You don't have to send an entire argumentative essay. Two or three paragraphs is totally okay!
2. Personalize your message for extra impact. Do you have a personal story you can share? How will the passing of this bill impact you in particular?
3. Make sure you mention that you are your congressperson's constituent.
4. Proofread!



Below is an example email. Don't forget to add your own spin on it!

Dear Representative _____,

I am one of your constituents located in _____, and I am writing to urge you to support the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020.

I've grown up listening to my teachers tell me climate change may be the biggest threat to my generation, yet I've watched as the US government has continually failed to pass sufficient climate legislation.

If we want to protect this planet's future, the ocean needs to be a part of our solutions. The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020 will protect and restore coastal ecosystems, thus increasing climate resiliency. It will also include the ocean as a part of climate solutions by promoting research into offshore wind and other marine energy. This bill will be crucial to sustaining this planet for my generation and generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sign the [petition](#) for the Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP)

ACTION # 2

The Ocean Climate Action Plan is a policy framework that supports sustainable blue jobs, offshore renewable energy, marine biodiversity, and much more. Read the full plan [here](#) and sign the petition!

Additional Resources

For a more detailed look at the history of the Blue New Deal, check out Gimlet podcast *How to Save a Planet* episode ["An Origin Story of the Blue New Deal"](#)

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