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Peer reviewed

The Ecocruiser

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I intend in this column to briefly highlight electronic resources on environmental topics. While the focus will be on Internet resources, I will also look at some non-net resources. Many of the resources mentioned here are worthy of more significant review; if you are interested in doing so, please contact [Maria Jankowska](#).

EcoNet

Last issue I promised a more in depth look at the [EcoNet Environment Gopher](#). Since then, there has been a great expansion of the [EcoNet](#) WorldWide Web site, so this review will cover both sites. The WWW site and its connections to EcoNet-affiliated organizations have become so extensive that it is not feasible to cover every organization and every link. Believe me, I tried to look at everything, but after spending two hours per day for the better part of three weeks, it is past time to get this column finished, so I will have to give up the effort and leave the rest for your browsing.

There is a lot more to EcoNet than its gopher and WWW sites; it is intended to serve as a communications medium for transferring information by and about the organizations and individuals who are subscribers, including its parent organizations, the Institute for Global Communications and the Association for Progressive Communications. Information about this aspect of EcoNet is available at both sites, and, since I am more concerned with what's publicly available over the Internet, I will also leave this for your personal examination and consideration.

On both the gopher and the WWW site of EcoNet, one section connects to information about environmental organizations. The list on the gopher includes those organizations which subscribed to EcoNet at some time in the past. I would like to emphasize the past tense of subscribed, because it is clear that the list is outdated in comparison to the list of organizations on the WWW. The WWW list of organizations also includes environmentally significant organizations which are not members of EcoNet. A distinguishing image, which reads @igc, precedes the listings of EcoNet member organizations and is absent from the listings of non-member organizations. Only one of the new additions to the WWW list, which are prominently featured before the alphabetical listing of all the listed organizations, is included on the gopher list, and a number of the other member organizations in the alphabetical list from the WWW site are absent from the gopher list. From this, I surmise that the few organizations which are listed on the gopher but not on the WWW are organizations which once were members of EcoNet, but have not renewed their subscriptions.

So, is it still worthwhile to use the gopher? Well, yes, if you can not access the more comprehensive WWW site. Good information by and about the organizations listed is available at the gopher site, for example, a document from American Rivers which lists the 10 [most endangered rivers of 1995](#) and 20 other highly threatened rivers, the [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) about wind](#) from the American Wind Energy Association, the [Electronic Clearinghouse on Defense Facility Closure, Cleanup, and Conversion](#) from the

California Economic Recovery & Environmental Restoration Project, the [Exotic Pest Plant Database](#) from the California Exotic Pest Plant Council, coverage of negotiations on environment and development at the United Nations in the [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#), coverage of international trade politics from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in the irregular, but mostly biweekly, globally conscious [Trade News](#) and the co-habitant of its gopher home, the [NAFTA & Inter-Am Trade Monitor](#), which focuses on Western Hemisphere countries, daily and other reports from the [International Arctic Project](#) expeditions, recording of congressional votes on environmental issues in the [National Environmental Scorecard](#) from the League of Conservation Voters, the electronic edition of the [Spore Print](#), the journal of the Los Angeles Mycological Society, information on starting and running nonprofit organizations from the [National Center for Nonprofit Boards](#), [Wicozanni Wowapi Good Health Newsletter](#) from the Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center, a searchable database of over 40,000 Pacifica Radio audio recordings and a collection of selected program transcripts in the [Pacifica Radio Archive](#), [PANUPS Pesticide Action Network Updates Service](#) and the searchable [PESTIS Pesticide Information Service](#) database from the [Pesticide Information Network North America](#), [RAN News](#) and other resources on rainforest ecology from the [Rainforest Action Network](#), [Sierra Club Action Alerts](#), [Johnny Picante's Helpful Hints To Save The Environment from the Surfrider Foundation](#), [World Watch Magazine](#) from the Worldwatch Institute, and the [Earth First! Journal](#).

Publications and news services on the EcoNet gopher not elsewhere mentioned include the [1994-95 People of Color Environmental Groups Directory](#), [GreenClips](#), the news digest for green architecture, and [RACHEL's Hazardous Waste News](#). General environmental resources accessible from the EcoNet gopher include the [Alaska Conservation Directory](#), the searchable catalog of environmental films and videos available from [Bullfrog Films](#), a collection of resources on endangered plants, animals and habitats on [EcoNet's Endangered Species Gopher](#), a collection of newsletters and materials pertaining to mushroom collecting, mycology, and mycophagy on [EcoNet's Mycology Archive](#), and files on environmental or land use issues which affect western lands in the US in the [EcoNet Western Lands Gopher](#). The EcoNet gopher also includes gopher menus for subject access to resources on biodiversity, climate, environmental racism & environmental justice, energy, environmental education, environmental law, forests, pesticides & sustainable agriculture, toxics, hazards & wastes, water, oceans & rivers, Earth Day 1995, and other Internet resources on the environment.

One organization that you can connect to from the WWW site of EcoNet, but which is not linked from the gopher, is [GAIN](#), the Global Action and Information Network. This is somewhat surprising in that all of the alerts, reports and updates on current environmental legislation and policy, and many of those on environmental and sustainability issues are actually located on the gopher. There is just no link to them from there. Also not on the gopher are the papers and reviews which define sustainability generally and in each of such issue areas as endangered species, energy, food & agriculture, forests, nuclear waste, population & consumption, toxics/pesticides, transportation, water, wetlands, and wilderness. There is another, separate section on lifestyle actions, such as leaving the car home, learning about your drinking water, slashing your trash, and stopping junk mail. Also useful are connections to the separate regional environmental directories, which together make up the [National Environmental Directory](#). A search on Moscow, Idaho, in the [Rocky Mountain Environmental Directory](#) turned up fairly current information about 10 local organizations.

The [Video Project](#) is billed as a non-profit organization specializing in the distribution of videos and multimedia programs on the environment, hands-on science, human rights, and related concerns. The

collection of videos and multimedia that they offer does seem to be of high quality, but their web pages have a commercial taint that is jarring in this setting.

The web pages of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy mostly just refer back to the gopher pages for content. One worthwhile addition only on the WWW is the [*Intellectual Property Rights Info Sheets*](#), in English, French or Spanish, which explore the effects of the legal mechanisms for copyrights, patents, and trademarks on biodiversity. The *Info Sheets* are also available by email. Simply send a blank email message to ipr-info@igc.apc.org to receive the index and instructions for retrieving each info sheet.

There is plenty of value at the web site of the [*National Wildlife Federation*](#). Among the many goodies to be found here are sample articles and photos from the NWF magazines *Ranger Rick*, *National Wildlife*, and *International Wildlife*, hot environmental issues for the current week in the *NWF EnviroHotline*, the "How To's" page, including such advice as how to raise money, how to organize a letter-writing campaign, how to meet with members of Congress and how to write a press release, *Animal Tracks On-Line*, a collection of environmental education lessons and activities for classroom or youth group use, the full-text reports *Our Unfair Share* on the effects of pollution on African-Americans in Washington, D.C. and the *Outdoor Ethics Study*, brief *NWF Fact Sheets* on many topics, such as biotechnology, toxic chemicals, clean air, clean water, coastal barriers, ancient forest and forest roads, and detailed introductions and position papers on the issues of clean water/wetlands, endangered species, farm bill, public lands, and takings.

The Rural Advancement Foundation International offers the bimonthly [*RAFI Communiqué*](#) in English or in Spanish. A recent article, "Biopiracy Update: A Global Pandemic", contains *RAFI's List Of Bioprospectors And Biopirates*, which includes, among the mostly pharmaceutical and genetic technology companies, the Missouri and New York Botanical Gardens and the National Cancer Institute.

The as yet unorganized site for the [*American Wind Energy Association*](#), begun as recently as October 27, 1995, lists everything available chronologically under "What's New". This includes the *Wind Energy Weekly Archives*, with articles from past issues of the newsletter arranged by such categories as economics of wind energy, future energy outlook, wind development news, wind energy: environmental issues, wind energy for home & business uses, and wind energy for remote communities and islands, which should satisfy the individualists among us. Also available at this site are full text reports on wind power and renewable energy, a FAQ on residential wind power and the *List of Small Wind Turbine Manufacturers*, and links to other wind energy sites on the web. None of this information seems to duplicate what was available for the same group from the EcoNet gopher and you have to use both sites to get all the information available over the Internet from the AWEA.

The web pages of [*GREEN*](#), the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network, include links to watershed resources on the Internet, to *GREEN Magazin Deutschland*, the first on-line magazine from GREEN Germany and the GREEN Catalog, which describes equipment, videos and publications available for monitoring watersheds, water quality, and air quality, for environmental education and for problem solving. GREEN's on-line conferences are also available if your browser can employ a news reader. Other options for accessing the conferences are given.

Here are just a few more. *Your Guide to Save Lake Superior* highlights the offerings of the [*Great Lakes Natural Resource Center*](#). The [*Green Market*](#) provides links to shop for products of ecologically conscious

companies and organizations by company name or by product type. The forum on the Green Market includes an *Earthscore Test* to rate your own environmental practices.

The web site of [Greenpeace](#) includes, in addition to a link to the gopher resources previously mentioned, the *Greenpeace Photo, Video and/or Audio Galleries*, details and photos of the Greenpeace ships, and information about current and continuing campaigns of the organization. The [Greens/Green Party U.S.A.](#) presents all you need to know about green politics, from philosophy to campaign tips, with election results for green party candidates in the past 3 elections (not 1995 yet) and connections to local green parties. In addition to the *National Environmental Scorecard*, which duplicates what is offered on the gopher, the League of Conservation Voters has coverage of *Votes '95* on the web site to check how elected officials have voted on recent environmental bills.

Besides access to all of the information via the organizations pages, EcoNet also offers access to most of the offerings in a more organized way, by listings under such issue headings as acid rain, agriculture & trade, animal rights, biodiversity, climate, development, endangered species, energy, environmental education, environmental justice & environmental racism, environmental law, forests, health, mining, mushrooms & mycology, population, sustainable development, toxics, hazards & wastes (including pesticides), transportation, water, seas, oceans, and rivers, and wildlife. There is also access in a more unorganized manner from a page with new and featured items. What there is not and what is badly needed due to the extensive coverage on this site is a search function that would operate across all the linked organizations.

That is it for EcoNet, at least for this review. I have not covered many other organizations which are also linked to this WWW site, but it is obvious from what I have covered that there is more than enough quality content to these pages to warrant repeated visits by anyone with the slightest interest in environmental issues. Content varies greatly, from legal documents to back-to-nature philosophy, but the widespread nature of those contents only confirms the umbrella-like status of EcoNet. I hope that all of us will support the efforts that EcoNet and its member organizations are giving and visit these sites continually. They are well worth it.

Ecotraveling

Ecotourism. Adventure travel. It is covered in [Ecoventure](#), a site conceived and operated by Ron Ziegler at Washington State University. Start your search for travel information among the books and articles referenced at "Base Camp". Perhaps of more interest for websurfers are the extensive links available to travel, adventure and environmental sites. There is also a section on unlinked electronic resources, including the news group GREEN TRAVEL, which can be joined by sending the message: "subscribe green-travel" to majordomo@igc.apc.org.

Ecopsychology

The theme for [Project NatureConnect](#) is that connecting with nature in peaceful, non-threatening ways is therapeutic. It is all based on the theories and words of Michael J. Cohen, applied ecopsychologist. There is enough here in articles and reviews to get the general essence of the ideas, but very little flavor is given of the activities that Dr. Cohen has devised to develop the sense of personal interconnection with nature. So it is somewhat difficult not to be skeptical about the nature of this site, which appears over and over to lead

one to the possibilities for ordering one of Dr. Cohen's books. Even the "free" self-guiding course seems to have an initial cost of \$58 for training materials. But we do not need to buy anything to take advantage of the idea of connecting with nature for psychological well-being; just get out there and peacefully interact with nature as often as you can and it will be an easy idea to comprehend.

Know Your Environment

Definitely free are the articles in the [Know Your Environment](#) series, which are provided courtesy of the Environmental Associates at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Articles like "Butterflies: Fragile Symbols of the Complex Natural World", "Inside the War on Chlorine", "Wetlands Are More Than Mere Swamps", and "Looking into Landfills" use scientific facts to illuminate environmental controversies. We are encouraged to not only use, reprint and redistribute the articles, but to give feedback on them.

That is all I have time for this go-around, 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; please send email to mikep@uidaho.edu.