

## WHO IS RISING TIDE?

Rising Tide is a grassroots network of groups and individuals who take direct action to confront the roots causes of climate change and promote local, community-based solutions to the climate crisis.

Our strategy is based on a no-compromise approach of stopping the extraction of more fossil fuels and preventing the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure. Equally important, we must phase out our current fossil fuel use and make a just transition to sustainable ways of living. What this means in terms of local organizing depends on the specific conditions unique to each town and bioregion. Rising Tide's tactics are diverse and creative, taking a bottom-up approach to connecting the dots between oil, war, capitalism, coal, and the destabilization of the global climate.

In July 2006, Rising Tide North America (RTNA) coordinated an international day of action against climate change and the G8, coinciding with the G8 meetings in Russia, with dozens of actions taking place

around the world. Also in July, RTNA teamed up with Earth First! to blockade an aging coal-fired power plant in Carbo, Virginia that the EPA credits with causing 60 premature deaths each year.

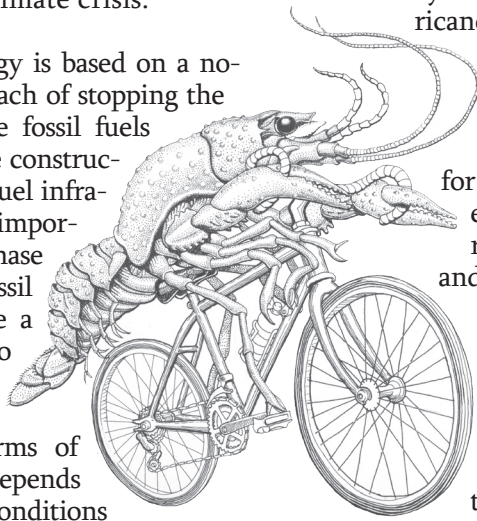
On the 1-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we organized critical mass bike rides in several cities across the US and Canada calling for climate justice and an end to environmental racism, car culture, and the oil industry.

In October 2006, members of RTNA organized a counter conference in Mexico City during the G8+5 meetings in Mexico. This gathering brought together a number of Mexican social and environmental groups to share stories and strategize around climate related issues.

This Spring, we're hitting the road with our cross-continental Climate Action Tour, a theatrical arsenal of workshops, games, music and multimedia presentations that will incite communities to act creatively in the face of impending crises.

*There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all!*

- Mario Savio, 1964



## CLIMATE JUSTICE

As we have witnessed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the people most affected by climate change are the same people who have been exploited and oppressed throughout the history of civilization – those outside the dominant race and class. On a global level, the regions expected to be hit the hardest by severe droughts, storms and rising sea levels are generally places with the least fossil fuel infrastructure – in other words, the people least responsible for creating climate chaos.

The potential for environmental racism on a scale we've not yet seen is downright scary; we got a taste of the future in New Orleans, where environmental refugees attempting to flee a drowning city by crossing the Crescent City bridge to the un-flooded and affluent suburb of Gretna were turned back by gunshots by the remnants of the suburb's police force. Such an environmental future cannot be allowed to pass; it's high time we step up our efforts to build real relationships with poor people and people of color who stand the most to lose from climate change.

## WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Throughout history, positive social change hasn't come from asking politely; it has come from people disobeying and disrupting the status quo. In other words, it has come from people taking direct action. To avert the worst potential climate change scenarios, we all need to take immediate and drastic steps to change the way our society functions. Not only do we need to change our own lifestyles to be more sustainable, but we need to instigate change on a societal and cultural level that deeply challenges the belief system that holds economic growth to be more sacred than intact ecosystems and healthy communities.

When polar bears go extinct as a result of melting sea ice, ExxonMobil needs to be held accountable. When the next Katrina hits, that carbon-spewing power plant giving all the kids in your neighborhood asthma needs to be shut down.

There are many different tactics within direct action: media stunts such as banner hangs allow you to get your message out and embarrass your opponent. Office occupations disrupt a company's ability to operate. Blockades can prevent a destructive project from destroying an ecosystem, or fuel from reaching a polluting power plant. Targeting investors can deny a company the money it needs to build a new pipeline. We all have different skills and strengths to offer; the important thing is to do something - direct action is the antidote to despair.

We need to start thinking strategically about how to spark a nationwide uprising against the fossil fuel industry that not only disrupts business as usual, but inspires widespread resistance.

## BUILDING THE WORLD WE WANT INSIDE THE SHELL OF THE OLD

Rising Tide believes that lobbying our “leaders” will have no major impact on the biased and undemocratic institutions they run, in which profit is the only real policy-maker. To create a just and sustainable society, people need to be directly involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

Clearly, we need to transition now to a more sustainable, community-based way of living. Growing our own food, sharing tools and resources, expanding bike culture (where applicable), organizing skill-shares, and educating and supporting each other are all ways of building community self-sufficiency and undermining the death-grip that the fossil fuel industries have on us. In fact, if we are going to survive, we must find ways of restructuring our communities to function independent of the industries and institutions that are destroying the life-support systems of the planet. Eventually, this will include abandoning centralized systems of energy production and industrial agriculture, where social and environmental costs are externalized and companies are not held accountable for how they interact with the environment and other members of their community.

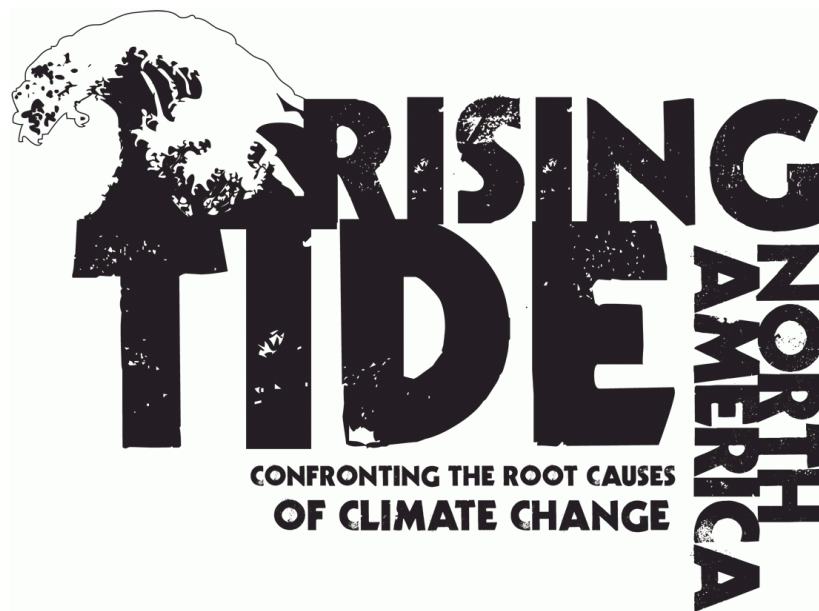
Ecosystem destruction directly, immediately, and negatively impacts weather patterns and climate stability on local, regional and global levels. Ensuring the survival of stable, healthy ecosystems is another important piece of the puzzle, both in terms of stabilizing the climate and in terms of preserving the land we depend on for food and drinkable water.

By looking beyond the murderous mechanisms of the current system and suggesting solutions that don't fit with “achievable” government priorities, we demand change on a scale that others shy away from. Taking direct action is one way to be reminded of the enormous power we have to change things for the better - a power that governments would rather we lost sight of completely.

Changes will be made by people, not institutions. Practical solutions exist; it's time we start using them and making them more widely accessible. We must dismantle the systems of oppression that permeate our culture and ourselves, and work toward real solidarity across lines of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. When we begin to build a culture of mutual aid and community autonomy, we demonstrate that we don't need the government, and certainly not giant corporations, to survive. We just need a livable planet.

### GET IN TOUCH:

Rising Tide North America PO Box 16851 Asheville, NC 28816  
info@risingtidenorthamerica.org  
www.risingtidenorthamerica.org



Rising Tide is an international network born out of the conviction that corporate-friendly and state-sponsored “solutions” to climate change will not save us. As a matter of survival, we must decrease our dependence on the industries and institutions that are destroying the planet and work toward community autonomy and sustainable living.

[www.risingtidenorthamerica.org](http://www.risingtidenorthamerica.org)

# PRINCIPLES OF RISING TIDE NORTH AMERICA

RTNA is a decentralized network of groups and individuals organizing against the root causes of climate change.

We are committed to Earth-centered, community-based solutions to the climate crisis that foster local autonomy and self-sufficiency. We are part of the global movement against climate chaos and for social and environmental justice and believe climate change can only be addressed by exposing the intersections between the oppression of humans and the earth. The “natural” disasters caused by climate change only amplify the injustices inherent in a capitalist, racist, and patriarchal society, and we must respond to them in ways that do not continue that oppression. We do not believe that the prominent, business-friendly means of addressing climate change will have a significant impact, and ultimately will not prevent catastrophic climate change. Market-based “solutions” like carbon offset schemes create social and ecological problems of their own, and ultimately only serve to validate the system that got us into this mess. Power hungry politicians, communities disconnected from themselves and the planet, and an economics based on money making and care-less consumption are fundamentally at odds with the concept of environmental sustainability. People and the planet are all that matter.

We reject the weak, corporate-designed and oriented half-measures in the Kyoto Protocol such as carbon trading and the “clean development mechanism.” Kyoto, with its seriously insufficient goal of 5.2% emissions reductions, has become a distraction rather than a solution. Scientists have estimated that even a 70% reduction in emissions by 2050 would result in a devastating 3.6 degree F. change. CO2 levels must be reduced as dramatically as possible, as quickly as possible. To this end, we believe in an immediate end to all new fossil fuel exploration and extraction, and a just, rapid transition away from the burning of fossil fuels.

We also reject nuclear energy and dams; these mega-projects are not sustainable and often result in the displacement of communities. Rather, we advocate a drastic increase in energy conservation and support a transition to clean energy sources such as wind, solar, and micro-hydro power.

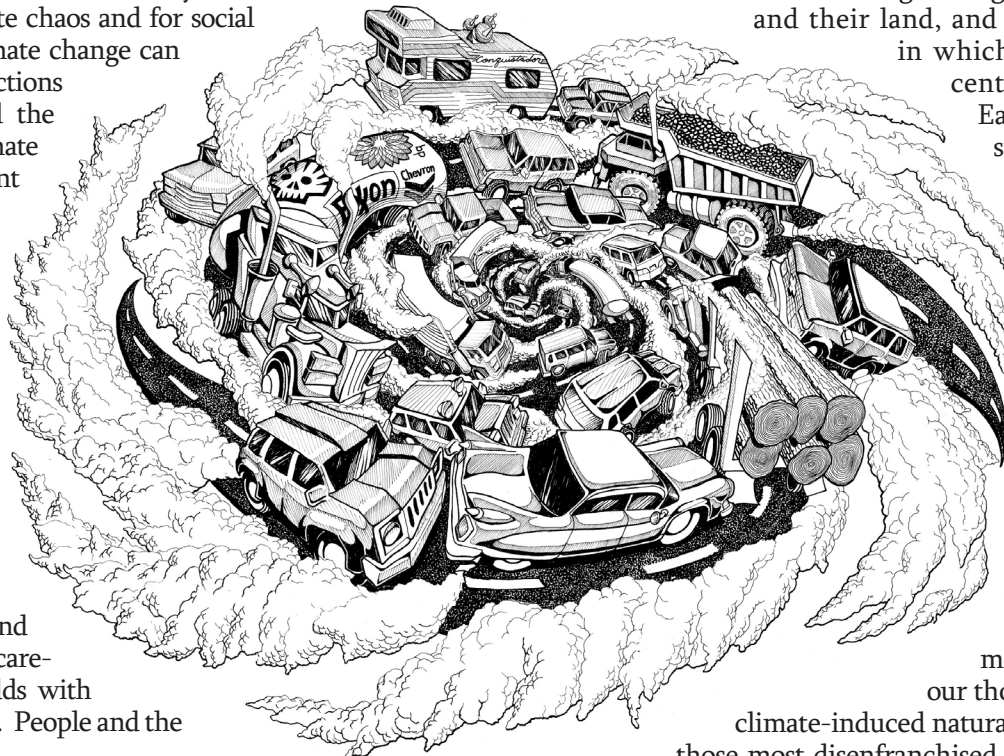
Tragically, many of the most well publicized and funded green initiatives are being directed by the very companies most responsible for carbon emissions, most responsible for environmental problems and fossil fuel related social injustices, and with the most to gain financially by stalling any large-scale transition away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

Any hope for a livable future rests not with these companies, but instead with communities organizing themselves to take control of their lives and their land, and with finding more simple ways of living in which we are not dependent upon the highly centralized industries that are destroying the Earth’s life-support systems as well as more sustainable and traditional cultures. In addition to challenging the root causes of climate chaos, we actively support these real and viable solutions.

Ecosystem preservation, recovery and restoration is essential to sequestering carbon and curbing the exponential rate of species extinction. Our agricultural systems also must be made to work more in harmony with the Earth’s systems; it’s time to abandon industrial agriculture in favor of small-scale, local food sources.

RTNA is committed to keeping environmental racism and the struggle for environmental and climate justice in the forefront of our thought and actions. The people hardest hit by climate-induced natural disasters have been and will continue to be those most disenfranchised by our society and least responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases: the poor, women, and people of color. RTNA is committed to challenging all forms of oppression.

RTNA supports direct action and encourages individuals and organizations to carry out autonomous actions that are in line with these principles, whether it’s directly obstructing the fossil fuel industry or establishing grassroots solutions to climate change like permaculture gardens and community-run bike shops. All Rising Tide groups should organize in an anti-oppressive and empowering manner with regard to race, class and gender. Groups using the name Rising Tide do not engage in sabotage or acts of violence.



# GET INVOLVED!

## START A LOCAL RISING TIDE GROUP

Are you sick of government inaction in the face of the greatest threat to life on Earth in the history of humanity? Are you ready to take action and organize in your community? Join the Rising Tide North America network! There are several ways to get involved in RTNA; you can start a local group, become a local contact, or, if you're part of an existing group involved in a climate related project or campaign, become a Rising Tide affiliate group.



Local groups and local contacts are the heart of RTNA. While the network as a whole works to coordinate and build a continental direct action movement for climate justice, it really comes down to local groups taking action. Whether it's organizing a community bike shop, blockading a gas station, or fighting a new coal plant, it's up to all of us taking action in our communities to bring down the fossil fuel juggernaut.

RTNA is built on the principles of decentralized organizing. As a local contact or affiliate group, you will be plugged into climate related projects and campaigns that are happening across North America but still maintain full autonomy in what your group chooses to do. There is no central command barking orders at you, nor any membership cards or monthly dues (though we gladly accept donations). All we ask for is a deep commitment to fighting climate change, that you keep in touch with us about your projects, and that you agree to our guiding principles.

If you're an individual wanting to join the RTNA network, a great way to start is by becoming a local contact helping out with one of our existing working groups. Some working groups are just one or a few people cranking out literature and resources, while others are major continent-wide projects with many activists working together. Some are focused on a specific campaign or education related to a particular climate change issue, others on anti-oppression and movement building (check our website for more details).



If you are part of an existing group that would like to join the Rising Tide network, whether you choose to operate under the "Rising Tide" banner or use a different name, we would love to hear about what you're up to and how we can work together. Just get in touch with us and we'll send you a packet of literature to help you get started - email [contact@risingtidenorthamerica.org](mailto:contact@risingtidenorthamerica.org).

# CLIMATE CHAOS AND THE POINT OF NO RETURN

150,000 people are already dying every year directly from the effects of climate change, and many thousands more are becoming environmental refugees. Within 50 years, nearly 40% of terrestrial plants and animals are expected to be driven to extinction as their native ranges are eliminated by changing temperatures. Polar bears and other arctic inhabitants, as well as most amphibians, face almost certain extinction. Due to unprecedented CO<sub>2</sub> levels, ocean pH is slated to drop .5 over this century, to levels that have not existed in the oceans for many millions of years. This acidification, as well as the warming of the ocean's waters, is expected to devastate plankton populations – the very basis of the ocean's food chain.

We cannot stop climate change; it's already happening. We do, however, have a chance to avert the worst of all potential scenarios, what scientists refer to as the "tipping point," or runaway climate change. To avoid the worst consequences of climate change, scientists believe that the US needs to stabilize emissions within a decade, begin reducing them soon thereafter, and cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. Depending on how society responds to the threat of global warming, global average temperatures could rise by between 2.5 and 14 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century. Many scientists view a 3.6 degree rise in average temperatures over pre-industrial levels as a limit beyond which large-scale, catastrophic impacts of climate change would become unavoidable. Even below this threshold, there will be significant impacts of the type we are just beginning to see: damage to ecosystems and crop yields, sea level rise, and increased intensity and frequency of storms, droughts and wildfires.

Beyond an increase of 3.6 degrees, scientists predict that we'll see the eventual loss of the Greenland ice sheet, the displacement of tens of millions of people due to sea level rise, expansion of insect-borne disease, a greater risk of positive feedback loops (like methane released in melting permafrost) that will lead to greater warming, and eventually, major crop failures in many parts of the world, extreme disruption of ecosystems, and an increased potential for the shutdown of the thermohaline circulation, which carries warmth from the tropics to Europe. If Greenland melts or breaks up and slips into the sea, or if half of Greenland and half of Antarctica melts or breaks up, sea levels worldwide will rise by 18-20 feet, displacing 40 million people in Shanghai alone and putting much of south Florida under water.

A million species face extinction by 2050, and capitalism's ongoing assault on the Earth's ecosystems is threatening to destroy the very life-support systems of the planet. Allowing business as usual to tip atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels past the point of no return is tantamount to a death sentence for countless species and people who lack the resources to relocate to more stable climates with more sustainable infrastructure in place. Some of the rich may survive such a scenario; the Earth's ecosystems and the poor will not.