

IDEAS INTO ACTION

25 Years of
Protecting the
Planet and
Improving
People's Lives

Since 1982, WRI has been providing ideas and information that have changed perceptions and behavior from Wall Street to Avenida Insurgentes.

Working with NGOs, companies, and governments in more than 80 countries, WRI creates alliances to protect ecosystems, mitigate climate change, develop sustainable enterprises, and guarantee access to environmental information and decisions.

WRI's mission is to move human society to live in ways that protect the Earth's capacity to provide for the needs and aspirations of current and future generation.

WHAT MAKES WRI UNIQUE?

- Commitment to protecting the environment and improving people's lives
- Focus on global, long-term problems
- Dedication to economically-sound, practical solutions combined with bold vision
- Partnership approach to influencing global institutions and delivering results on the ground
- Analytical excellence and a non-partisan approach
- Ideas must lead to action

WRI's greatest asset, however, is its staff – who for twenty five years have devoted their energy, ideas, and passion to creating a better world. Their successes continue to inspire change. This is a small extract from the story of their accomplishments.

WRI MILESTONES/ACHIEVEMENT TIMELINE

1982 Gus Speth launches WRI with a \$15 million investment from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. WRI sets out to put long term issues of sustainability and human well-being on the global agenda.

1984 Seventy-five experts and leaders in science, government, industry, agriculture, energy, and environmental studies from 20 countries convened by WRI develop a set of practical proposals to address pressing global environmental and development issues, published as *The Global Possible*.

1985 WRI helps organize the first international meeting in Villach, Austria, on the build up of CO2 and other "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere.

1985 WRI's research and policy studies on acid rain in the western U.S. raises awareness about the effects of air pollution on forests and crops and adds to the national debate on this issue.

1986 WRI helps organize early U.S. Congressional hearings on global climate change.

1986 Recognizing a serious gap in information about the condition of the world's natural resources, WRI launches *World Resources Report*, a biennial global assessment of environmental conditions and trends that for the first time provides country by country environmental data.

1989 In two groundbreaking studies, *Redefining Security* and *Breathing Easier*, WRI explores the connections among air pollution, energy security, and climate change.

1989 WRI publication *Wasting Assets* pioneers natural resource accounting, a practical methodology for valuing ecosystem services and consumption of natural resources.

1989 WRI implements the first carbon offset project with AES and USAID. Though imperfect at the time, the concept has evolved to become a commonly-used strategy for addressing climate change, and the program for assessing carbon benefits is the basis for today's calculation of offsets.

1990 The UN Development Programme commissions a feasibility study by WRI, which lays the foundation for creation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The GEF has provided \$6.2 billion in grants and generated over \$20 billion in co-financing from other sources to support over 1,800 projects that produce global environmental benefits in 140 developing countries and economies in transition.

1991 *Drowning the National Heritage* and *Minding The Carbon Store* begin early focus on U.S. impacts of climate change, and policy opportunities for mitigation.

1992 WRI and its partners launch the Global Biodiversity Strategy, which introduced proposals for conserving biodiversity that redefined the term "biodiversity" to include not just the preservation of species but the natural systems that support life. The Strategy played a major role in the development of the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro.

1993 *Green Fees*, WRI's innovative analysis of economically efficient taxes and fees that

benefit the environment, helps to launch a Congressional debate on green taxes.

1993 WRI co-chairs the President's Council on Sustainable Development, a group of industry, environmental and labor CEOs joined by five cabinet secretaries that issues *Sustainable America*, a visionary set of consensus recommendations for new policies and practices.

1993 WRI's *Car Trouble* argues that clean fuels and new technologies are the keys to the long term future of the U.S. Auto Industry. (*If only they'd followed our advice!*)

1995 Using case studies from nine U.S. companies, WRI's *Green Ledgers* demonstrates that incorporating environmental costs in corporate accounting can improve the bottom line and promote business sustainability.

1997 WRI creates national "environmental indicators" to track the physical transactions in an economy. To be used with economic indicators, such as the Gross Domestic Product, these resource accounts were adopted in Europe and Japan and enable policy and other decision-makers to understand the material requirements of their economies and when physical constraints are likely to be reached.

1997 *Are Developing Countries Doing Enough* for the first time details significant efforts by developing countries that reduce GHG emissions.

1997 *A Guide for the Perplexed*, WRI's analysis of the costs and benefits of reducing GHG emissions, is widely cited among policy makers in preparing the U.S. positions going into the negotiations that led to the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change.

1998 WRI, BP, GM, and Monsanto issue the *Safe Climate, Sound Business* action agenda in response to the risks and opportunities from climate change. The agenda spawns several new climate and business projects at WRI.

1999 WRI becomes the first NGO to commit to reducing its own CO₂ emissions to net zero. More recently, *Hot Climate, Cool Commerce* provides this same roadmap for service-sector companies.

2000 Building on WRI's ground-breaking map of the world's large, remaining, intact natural forests, WRI launches Global Forest Watch to monitor and protect the world's forests. The network now maps 90% of the world's primary forests and provides maps and technical expertise to governments,

businesses, and NGOs to help them make better decisions about how to manage forests.

2000 WRI convenes a core team of civil society organizations from around the world to establish The Access Initiative (TAI). TAI is the only global movement committed to improving citizen access to information, participation, and justice in decisions that affect the environment.

2001 A WRI analysis of the condition of the world's ecosystems catalyzes a four-year, \$25 million effort called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Managed under the auspices of the United Nations, this first ever global "check up of the health of the planet" engaged over 1,400 scientists from 95 nations and is changing the way society understands and manages the living systems upon which life depends.

2001 WRI and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development release the first edition of the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard. Developed through a wide-ranging global collaboration, the GHG Protocol has emerged as the pre-eminent international standard and been adopted by hundreds of

companies and government programs such as the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme.

2002 WRI and international partners launch the Partnership for Principle 10, an international network made up of governments, international organizations, and civil society groups working together to promote transparent, inclusive, and accountable decision-making for sustainable development.

2003 WRI's Green Power Market Development Group, a partnership of Fortune 500 companies dedicated to building corporate markets for renewable energy, completes the largest commercial and industrial purchases of renewable energy in U.S. history. Today, the Group and its affiliate members have completed deals for more than 650MW of renewable projects.

2004 WRI convenes the first major conference aimed at addressing ways in which business can reduce global poverty by meeting the needs of the world's poorest people at the "base of the economic pyramid." The conference led to expanded investments by Microsoft and Intel among other companies.

More recently, the Inter-American Development Bank launched a five-year, multi-billion dollar poverty reduction initiative focusing on economic empowerment for the poor through the support of private-public opportunities.

2005 WRI assists seven northeastern states to develop a plan to stabilize power plant greenhouse gas emissions through 2015, and reduce them by 10% by 2020.

2005 Mexico City launches its first Bus Rapid Transit Corridor. A fleet of eighty new low-pollution buses carry 250,000 passengers per day, reducing 47,000 tons of CO₂ emissions from the air per year and cutting travel time from the far north of the city to the south in half. The bus system is the centerpiece of a unique partnership between Mexico City and EMBARQ – The WRI Center for Sustainable Transport.

2006 WRI's Capital Markets team works with financial institutions to embed climate opportunities and risk into financial analysis and investment decisions. A report with Citigroup Investment Research, *Investing in Solutions to Climate Change*, looks broadly at investment opportunities in technologies

that lower GHG emissions or increase energy efficiency. Earlier work with Merrill Lynch examined the auto industry.

2006 WRI's New Ventures project engages leading sustainable investment funds to increase the flow of capital to small and medium size business in emerging economies, resulting in the transfer of more than \$19 million to 140 companies. WRI has trained more than 1,000 entrepreneurs in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and Mexico.

2006 Using new Global Forest Watch (GFW) maps and analysis, Brazil establishes new federally protected areas and state forests, setting aside 9.5 million hectares of important intact rainforest.

2007 The U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) calls on the federal government to quickly enact strong national legislation that requires significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. USCAP issues consensus principles and recommendations on a policy framework to meet GHG targets. Coalition members include WRI, NRDC, Environmental Defense, Pew Center, Alcoa, BP America, Caterpillar, Duke Energy, DuPont, FPL Group, GE, Lehman Brothers, PG&E, and PNM Resources.

The WRI logo represents a knot tying together the threads of natural resource use and conservation, economic development, and social equity through research, capacity building, and institutional change. It was inspired by the Tibetan "knot of eternity," an ancient symbol with multi-layered meanings and a reminder of the connectedness of all things.



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The image above and on the cover is of a Roman marble mosaic panel, Circa 3rd-4th Century A.D. The mosaic, on display at WRI, is on loan from Mr. David Wierdsma of Greenwich, Connecticut, who recognized and appreciated its similarity to the WRI logo.

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