

CURRENT AFFAIRS

CLIMATE CHRONICLES

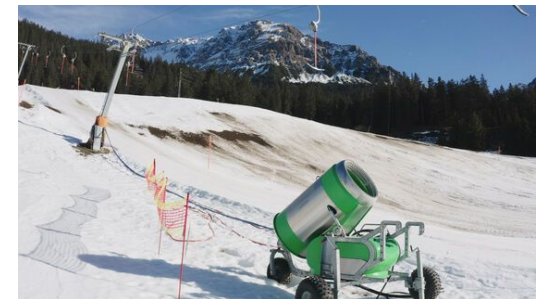
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This series presents a collection of impressive stories about our planet's changing climate and the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

Join us on this captivating journey, exploring the destructive effects of storms, the challenges of winter tourism, and the potential of wood as a sustainable building material. From mangroves as climate savors to the devastating impact of wildfires, each episode unveils the need for action, while also igniting a sense of hope for a resilient future. There is no planet B!

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1. Climate Saviour Mangroves

Mangroves are truly miraculous trees. But whilst their populations continue to shrink, there is still hope. They are one of the most productive and biodiverse ecosystems on earth, growing where conditions are deadly for other plants. Mangroves protect coasts from floods and hurricanes and store five times more CO₂ than other trees. But since the 1980s, more than a third of global mangrove populations have disappeared. This has dramatic consequences for the environment and the inhabitants of the coasts. In Mexico, for instance, fish stocks are shrinking and the basis of life is disappearing - for people and animals. But hope still remains: More and more local residents are fighting back against the destructive effects of tourism on the mangroves, and scientists are developing reforestation programs to nurture the mangrove populations back to health.

2. To the Very Last Drop

In South Africa, more than 50% of the population has no access to clean drinking water. This is a problem that affects many regions of the world. How can a fair water supply be ensured? Corruption, climate change, a broken infrastructure - these are the core causes that contribute to the bad drinking water supplies in South Africa. As a result, more than half the population has to buy water or rely on polluted water. We accompany people fighting against water scarcity and for a fair water supply in South Africa. While scientists and activists try to get more say in politics with the help of crowd-sourced science, an investigator shows how corruption systematically runs through the water sector.

3. Southern Europe on Fire

Every summer, thousands of hectares of forest and land are burning in southern Europe. Fire-fighting aircraft and firefighters barely manage to bring these mega-fires under control. The number of fires has doubled in the last 12 years. More than 90% of them are man-made. Many scientists are therefore calling for less investment in fighting fires and more in prevention. Portugal and Spain show how fire is fought with fire - while in Sicily citizens stand alone on the firefront.

4. Wild Winds - Destructive Storms Though Climate Change

The world faces strong storms, and weather models have calculated that there will be more and more of them in the future... In Lacanau near Bordeaux, for the first time in Europe, residents are thinking about moving from the area. They doubt they can win the battle against the storms as sea levels rise. In the forests, too, the storm areas are getting bigger. Mountain forests are in danger; they can no longer withstand heat and storms. Without forests, the inhabitants are defenseless against rockfalls and avalanches. In Switzerland, therefore, a globally unique experiment is underway: the search for the forest of the future. Which tree species will be able to cope best with the changed conditions caused by climate change?

5. Logging the Rainforest – Sustainable Forestry

Gabon is a natural paradise: 80 percent of the country is rainforest. So far, the country has made a living from oil, but change is underway. Gabon wants to develop the rainforest economically without destroying it. On the contrary - the felling should protect nature and the climate and make Gabon independent of the petroleum industry. The Swiss company Precious Woods, which specializes in the sustainable management of tropical forests, is playing a pioneering role. With hundreds of employees, the company manages vast forests that are home to the last forest elephants and gorillas on earth. We get to the bottom of the question of whether deforestation and nature conservation really go together. Because critics say that every felled tree is one too many.

6. Winter Tourism in the Alps – Between Euphoria and Distress

Swiss winter sports resorts want to get back to normal, but global problems have crept up the mountain slopes. After a two-year tourism slump due to the pandemic, mountain holidays are in great demand. Guests are coming in large numbers, and the bookings promise hoteliers and ski lifts an excellent season. But climate change is changing our winters. Ski resorts can no longer operate without artificial snow. High electricity prices and a shortage of skilled workers are adding to the pressure on the industry.

7. Wood - The Future of Sustainable Building?

Wood regenerates and stores carbon dioxide. In the face of the climate crisis, wood could become the building material of the future. The tallest wooden high-rise building in Germany is currently being built in Hamburg, with 19 floors and a height of 65 meters. A 80-meter tall wooden residential tower is also set to be built in Switzerland soon. This is new territory for architects and building authorities, but it is a trend that is gaining momentum. The traditional building material offers great advantages: it guarantees high load-bearing capacity, is comparatively lightweight, and provides excellent insulation. Concrete, on the other hand, is one of the biggest drivers of climate change. At universities such as Cambridge and ETH Zurich, research into wood as a building material is being carried out intensively, in order to make it even more load-bearing and resilient. Technically processed wood is set to be used more frequently in the global construction sector. The scientists' vision is that houses could be built from wood in a climate-friendly manner and could also become huge CO2 storage facilities. However, this can only work if we manage our forests differently. "We save the forests, and the forests save us," says Marc Palahi of the European Forest Institute.

8. Surviving the Drought in Kenya

In Africa, unlike in Europe, droughts are nothing new. But like everywhere else, they too are lasting longer and are more extreme - the consequences of global warming remain undisputed. Combined with the war in Ukraine, they led to skyrocketing food prices and showed how dependent Africa had become on imports. Ruth Oniang'o, one of Africa's first female nutrition professors, shows that Africa, or in this case Kenya, is quite capable of feeding itself. The 75-year-old has already convinced more than 100,000 farmers in western Kenya to switch to cultivating local varieties to combat the increasingly unpredictable seasons. A trend that is growing internationally, but native varieties are only part of the solution. In Turkana, the barren north of Kenya, there has been a drought for three years. People have lost almost all their livestock, forcing nomadic pastoralists in Turkana to redefine their millennia-old traditions. Billy Kapua, the son of a cattle breeder, has been fighting for the survival of his people for years and shows how a mixture of traditional lifestyles with modern methods could work.

9. Climate Hotspot Mediterranean – Challenges and Chances

In the Mediterranean, temperatures are rising 20 percent faster than the global average. People in the region suffer from long periods of drought, heavy rainfall with floods, forest fires and heat waves. However, there are solutions being explored to mitigate climate change and cope with the resulting challenges. In Spain, a young couple is convinced that regenerative agriculture holds the key to restoring ecological balance while maintaining profitability. Israel's invention of drip irrigation has revolutionized farming, demonstrating successful cultivation with limited water. Meanwhile, Morocco, a climate champion, boasts one of the world's largest solar power plants and Africa's largest climate technology research laboratory. To combat desertification, environmental activist Halim Sbai is revitalizing oases by planting palm trees and bringing life back to the region.