

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

[June 7, 2021]



Our weekly bulletin collects and digests news of the past week.

Contributions welcome.

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NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

Guardian: [World must rewild on massive scale to heal nature and climate, says UN](#)

A report from the UN Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization stated that world governments must restore at least 2.47 billion acres of land by 2030, an area larger than the size of China, to reach nature and climate goals. Humans currently use about 1.6x the amount of resources the earth can naturally and sustainably regenerate each year. The authors of the report feel that “short-term economic gains are being prioritized over the health of the planet” and that “the revival of ecosystems must be met with all the ambition of the space race.”

Science: [Venus can't wait—NASA plans blockbuster return to hothouse neighbor](#)

NASA announced two planned robotic missions to Venus, which will be their first trip to the planet since the early 1990s. The missions aim to draw parallels between Venus and the Earth's own evolution and will together cost around \$1 billion. They will collect information about the planet's atmosphere, topography, and geology, with plans to analyze noble gas isotopes that could indicate whether Venus ever contained as much water as Earth and study its possible plate tectonics.

NPR: [How UFO sightings went from conspiracy theory to a serious government inquiry](#)

A report prepared by US officials and analysts concerning US Navy footage of UFOs cannot explain the “unusual phenomena”, stating that the technology and its capabilities that appear in the video were not created as part of classified US government programs, but also that evidence does not indicate alien technology. The Department of Defense officially released the footage in April 2020, stating its intention was to clear up misconceptions about whether or not the already circulating footage was real.

Washington Post: [Vaccination rates fall off, imperiling Biden's July Fourth goal](#)

Biden had hoped to have 70% of American adults vaccinated by the Fourth of July, but the number of daily shots has decreased drastically, with averages of under 1 million being given a day compared to 3.4 million a day in April. 13 states have already reached the 70% mark, and 15 other states and the District of Columbia currently have over 60% of adults vaccinated. The rest lag behind as around 1/3 of Americans do not plan to get vaccinated.

NPR: [The U.S. is sending 1 million vaccines to Mexico border cities and resort spots](#)

The US plans to ship 25 million excess doses to countries around the world, with 1 million Johnson & Johnson vaccines being sent to Mexico, specifically to resort areas and areas along the border, hoping to boost the country's economy. Over 23.2 million Mexican adults have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine, but increased access and distribution is needed to reach its population of 130 million.

Politico: [Biden freezes oil leases in Alaska refuge pending new environmental review](#)

The coastal plain of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was opened to oil and gas development in 2017. Last week, the Interior Department announced that all oil and gas leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will be suspended until reviews of potential environmental impacts are conducted. The reviews could result in the termination of leases or impose additional restrictions on them. This announcement followed the Biden administration's move to support the Willow project, which involves oil and gas development in an area west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Guardian: [The Everglades are dying. An alliance between Biden and Republicans could save them](#)

Real estate development, agricultural pollution, and saltwater intrusion are threatening the 1.5m acre Florida Everglades, which act as a subtropical preserve. Governor Ron DeSantis recently signed an agreement to build a large reservoir that would help freshwater flow into the Everglades, as well as supported several other projects to restore the ecosystem. Biden's recent 2022 budget proposal included \$350 million for restoration efforts in south Florida, with Florida's Republican-led congressional delegation originally requesting double that amount.

REGIONAL NEWS

IndyStar: [Indiana cement plant to pay millions in fines, upgrades over alleged Clean Air Act violations](#)

The cement plant Lone Star Industries, Inc. in Greencastle, IN will pay millions of dollars in a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency and the state of Indiana over nearly a decade of Clean Air Act violations. The plant allegedly emitted hazardous air pollutants that exceeded state and federal limits.

Energy News Network: [10 energy policy takeaways from Indiana's busy legislative session](#)

A key outcome of the session was the development of an energy task force that will focus on clean energy goals. Many of the bills disputed in the session relate to solar

energy, coal ash storage, and electric heat in new constructions. The outcomes of these bills reflect the influence of public involvement in the legislative process.

BioCrossroads: [BioCrossroads adds Lilly, Indiana Biosciences Research Institute executives to Board of Directors](#)

The Indiana initiative recently welcomed Adrienne Brown, vice president of US Diabetes at Eli Lilly and Company, and Alan Palkowitz, PhD, president and CEO of the Indiana Biosciences Research Institute (IBRI) to the board of directors. The public-private collaboration aims to support research and business in the life sciences.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Nature: [First science adviser in US president's cabinet talks COVID, spying and more](#)

Nature spoke to Lander on his first day in office about his goals for the OSTP (House Office of Science and Technology Policy), criticisms of him, and some of the weighty priorities—such as addressing how to prepare for the next pandemic—that Biden has tasked him with.

Foreign Policy: [Science and Pseudoscience in India](#)

Indiana University's Sumit Ganguly the deluge of medical disinformation that members of India's ruling party and its acolytes have unleashed and the critical need for improved regulation to prevent the hawking of spurious drugs and therapies.

Science: [Come on, CDC, we need you!](#)

In the course of carrying out its appointed task of communicating science and promoting the best health practices, the CDC can also appear to be making policy. But where do we draw the line between proffering advice and promulgating policy? Maybe the CDC and the administration need to step back and consider if there is a better way for the agency to protect public health.

Yale 360: [How returning lands to Native tribes is helping protect nature](#)

From California to Maine, land is being given back to Native American tribes who are committing to managing it for conservation. Some tribes are using traditional knowledge, from how to support wildlife to the use of prescribed fires, to protect their ancestral grounds.

Morning Ag Clips: [Is carbon the "crop" of the future?](#)

An increasing awareness and concern about the environment, changes in government policy, America's re-entry into the Paris Agreement and a robust demand for carbon offsets all point toward an appetite for a different type of agricultural crop—carbon.

TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS

Action Network: [Sign the petition: Federal infrastructure bill must be big, bold and green](#)

President Biden has unveiled the first half of his major infrastructure plan. There's a lot to like in the bill to fix our crumbling roads, bridges, and schools—but more needs to be done. And most importantly, the rich and corporations will finally have to start paying more taxes.

The CSIU Weekly News Bulletin is now available on the web. To view this page online go to <https://csiub.org/weekly-news-bulletins>. To view archives of past bulletins, see <https://csiub.org/bulletin-archives>.

Our CSIU news bulletin is intended to provide a brief update on recent news, editorials, as well as action items related to science integrity and science policy. Note that editorial pieces and action items are assembled from a variety of sources and organizations; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy priorities of Concerned Scientists @ IU. This week's news bulletin was compiled by CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of English and by ASIU member Emma Hand, a rising senior majoring in biology. **We are delighted to welcome ASIU member and rising sophomore Rose Schnabel, an aspiring science writer, to our team!** If you'd like to volunteer—or if you have additional links you'd like to share for future bulletins, send them to Christoph at cirmsche@indiana.edu.

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