

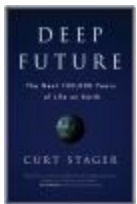
Readings on Mother Earth

This selective book list offers an introduction to titles that focus on Earth and some of its environmental issues, both human-generated and naturally occurring, such as energy paths, global warming, ocean acidification, and disasters. Renowned environmentalists such as Tim Flannery, Bill McKibben and David Suzuki weigh in on some of the issues facing Earth and push for a sustainable planet, while others look at disaster planning and survival, eco-friendly entrepreneurs, and planetary forecasting for the future.



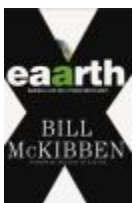
[This borrowed earth: lessons from the fifteen worst environmental disasters around the world](#) / Robert Emmet Hernan, 2009.

Hernan recounts 15 major environmental disasters in detail, including Bhopal (1984), Chernobyl (1986), Exxon Valdez (1989), Three Mile Island (1979), and ongoing Brazilian rainforest deforestation and global climate change.



[Deep future: the next 1,000 years of life on earth](#) / Curt Stager, 2011.

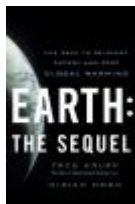
Climatologist Stager takes a long-term approach to global environmental and climate change. His position is contrary to the alarmist point of view taken on global warming and he is critical of media coverage on the subject. He uses biology, chemistry and geology to place current events within long-term planetary evolution. Humankind's influence on climate change has put off the next Ice Age by another 70,000 years.



[Eaarth: making a life on a tough new planet](#) / Bill McKibben, 2010.

McKibben cites problems such as increasing sea levels, ocean acidification, and rising temperatures that harm life through disease, drought, famine, floods and storms. The current carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are likely to lead to permanent changes on Earth. Alternative energy paths are unlikely to be a viable solution given political inertia. Humankind needs to refocus on local self-sufficient communities with local and sustainable energy and food production rather than continued reliance on external sources and unbound growth.

Also available in [Audiobook CD](#) and [Talking Book \(Restricted to Print Disabled Patrons\)](#) formats.



[Earth, the sequel: the race to reinvent energy and stop global warming](#) / Fred Krupp and Miriam Horn, 2008.

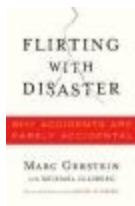
Krupp and Horn discuss cap-and-trade systems for curbing carbon emissions; examine different entrepreneurial examples of utilizing alternative energy paths including geothermal, solar, biofuels (with reduced carbon footprints), tidal, electric cars and smart energy grids. Such examples suggest that corporate profitability can be matched with environmental sustainability. The book looks at carbon sequestration in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

Also available in [DVD](#) format.



[Eco barons: the dreamers, schemers, and millionaires who are saving our planet](#) / Edward Humes, 2009.

Journalist Humes portrays several (some of them wealthy) environmentalists who are using their resources for Earth's benefit. Doug Tompkins uses his fashion-generated fortune to protect rainforests in South America. Ted Turner owns 15 ranches whose intent is to protect indigenous species. Roxanne Quimby uses her cosmetics-based fortune to buy and manage vast land tracts in Maine. Engineering professor Andy Frank has faced the reticence of the auto industry in supporting his plug-in hybrid car.



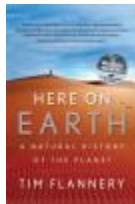
[Flirting with disaster: why accidents are rarely accidental](#) / Marc S. Gerstein, 2008.

Bad decisions led to catastrophes such as Chernobyl, Space Shuttle Challenger explosion and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Gerstein also examines bankrupt countries, as well as corporate and military problems. Sociocultural and psychological roadblocks restrict whistleblowing as an activity for predicting and forestalling disasters. Small events can lead to larger ones.



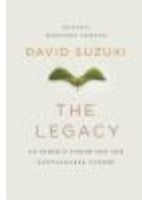
[Global catastrophes and trends: the next fifty years](#) / Vaclav Smil, 2008.

Geographer Smil examines both cataclysmic events (i.e. eruptions, pandemics, wars, major terrorist attacks) and ongoing global trends (i.e. naturally-occurring and human-generated) of a demographic, economic, environmental and political nature.



[Here on earth: a natural history of the planet](#) / Tim F. Flannery, 2011.

Flannery examines Earth's history and human evolution using two opposing theories, namely a Darwinist reductionist approach through selfish exploitation of resources, and a holistic, Gaian approach supported by James Lovelock and Alfred Russel Wallace that views the planet as a living, self-regulating organism with the opportunity for humankind to learn from its mistakes. Flannery comes down on the Gaian side in which humankind as part of the natural world can evolve co-operatively with other species in a sustainable manner.



[The legacy: an elder's vision for our sustainable future](#) / David T. Suzuki, 2010.

While he is concerned about the planet's well-being, environmentalist and geneticist Suzuki is also optimistic about the future. Environmentalists need to more closely examine the main reasons for humankind's destructive bent, including a lack of regard for our species' spiritual reliance upon nature. Humankind has an opportunity to transform the planet but one must challenge the outdated notion that environmental protection is financially impractical and unattainable.

Also available in [eBook](#) format.

[Now or never: why we need to act now to end climate change and create a sustainable future](#) / Tim F. Flannery, 2009.

Flannery offers causes and consequences of and possible solutions for dealing with global warming. He offers various initiatives that should be undertaken simultaneously to achieve sustainability, including the development of an electric car, a carbon trading mechanism for South American rainforests to facilitate carbon capture, and the use of a holistic approach to link food production with carbon sequestration.

Also available in [Audiobook CD](#) and [eAudiobook](#) formats.



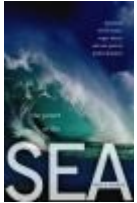
[A paradise built in hell: the extraordinary communities that arise in disaster](#) / Rebecca Solnit, 2009.

Solnit uses the San Francisco earthquake (1906), Halifax explosion (1917), London blitz (1940-1941), Mexico City earthquake (1985), the 9/11 attack (2001) and Hurricane Katrina (2005) to show that individuals rise to the occasion in disastrous situations to help themselves and their fellow citizens. Elite figures in authority may feel challenged and resort to clampdowns to maintain control.



[Planning for disaster: how natural and man-made disasters shape the built environment](#) / William G. Ramroth, 2007.

Architect Ramroth looks at how disasters shape the human-built environment. Disasters influence how architects, engineers, politicians and urban planners plan and design cities, bridges, highways, tunnels and buildings. The author looks at catastrophic historical events such as the London fire (1666) and the San Francisco earthquake and fire (1906), as well as recent disasters such as the 9/11 terrorist attack (2001) and Hurricane Katrina (2005).



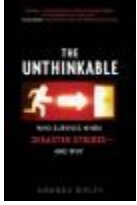
[The power of the sea: tsunamis, storm surges, rogue waves, and our quest to predict disasters](#) / Bruce B. Parker, 2010.

Oceanographer Parker focuses on ocean modeling and forecasting. He discusses the role of the moon, sun, the earth's axial tilt, and centrifugal force from the earth's rotation on pulling the oceans. Gravity is the power source for tides but weather and geography determine how high tides rise. Parker devotes much attention to tsunamis and storm surges. Parker and others use disaster happenings as a means to predict sea movements through the use of global warning networks, satellites and computers.



[Sea sick: the global ocean in crisis](#) / Alanna Mitchell, 2009.

Science journalist Mitchell argues that humans are dependent on the oceans for their survival. The oceans are sick and threatened by problems including acidification caused by atmospheric carbon dioxide, coastal pollution and overfishing. She remains hopeful that humankind may turn things around.



[The unthinkable: who survives when disaster strikes and why](#) / Amanda Ripley, 2008.

Reporter Ripley, who covered Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, offers a basic accounting of disaster and survival by using survivors' personal accounts and scientific research that shows how the human brain works in a threatening situation through the stages of denial, deliberation and action. The author offers tips on how to boost one's chance of survival.



[Whole earth discipline: an ecopragmatist manifesto](#) / Stewart Brand, 2009.

The editor of the former Whole Earth Catalog takes an unconventional approach, arguing for: continuing migration to large urban centres, development of vertical farms, nuclear energy, and the use of genetically engineered organisms. Echoing James Lovelock that global warming cannot be stopped, resulting in a metamorphosis of habitable areas into inhabitable wastelands, Brand suggests innovative geoengineering projects to reduce global warming's impact.



[The world in 2050: four forces shaping civilization's northern future](#) / Laurence C. Smith, 2010.

Geoscientist Smith examines four worldwide forces that will influence the planet's future: climate change, demographic trends, globalization, and natural resource demand. Eight nations of the Arctic Rim are expected to become more prosperous with increased access to minerals, natural gas, oil and water but also with the potential for greater conflict. Countries in proximity to the equator will face aging populations, water shortages, and increasing energy costs and coastal flooding plaguing overpopulated megacities.