

Common Ground Media, Inc. Presents



Dirt! The Movie

Sales Contact:
Tracy J. Brown
Common Ground Media, Inc.
310 399 7793
tjbrown@earthlink.net

Press Contacts:
Maggie Begley
Maggie Begley Communications
310 301 1785
Maggie@mbcprinc.com

A Film by Gene Rosow and Bill Benenson
Narrated by Jamie Lee Curtis

Dirt! The Movie

Dirt! The Movie is an insightful and timely film that tells the story of the glorious and unappreciated material beneath our feet. One teaspoon of dirt contains a billion organisms working in remarkable balance to maintain and sustain a series of complex, thriving communities that impact our daily lives.

Inspired by William Bryant Logan's acclaimed book *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, *Dirt! The Movie* takes a humorous and substantial look into the history and current state of the living organic matter that we come from and will later return to. An eclectic group of participants ranging from biologists to prisoners incarcerated on Rikers Island offer answers to problems and inspire us to clean up the mess that we've created. *Dirt! The Movie* will make you want to get dirty.

Dirt! The Movie is directed by Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow and produced through Common Ground Media, Inc., a non-profit foundation.



ABOUT THE FILM

Dirt! The Movie introduces viewers to dirt's fascinating history. Four billion years of evolution have created the dirt that recycles our water, gives us food, provides us shelter, and that can be used as a source of medicine, beauty and culture.

However, people have become greedy and careless, endangering this vital living resource with destructive methods of agriculture, mining practices, and urban development. The word dirt has become "dirty". This abusive behavior has yielded catastrophic results, which the film does not shy away from: mass starvation, drought, floods and global warming.

Dirt! The Movie proves that times are changing. Brown is the new green. More than 25 renowned global visionaries in countries around the world are discovering new ways of thinking as they come together to repair this natural resource with practical, viable solutions. These participants include Bill Logan, Andy Lipkis, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Fritjof Capra, Pierre Rabhi, Wangari Maathai, Wes Jackson and Majora Carter.

To capture these prescient people and their inspiring stories, the production team filmed in more than 20 locations, including Argentina, Brazil, France, India, Kenya, and several regions of the United States.

On their journey, the filmmakers found:

- farmers and agronomists re-discovering sustainable agriculture
- tiny villages standing up for their right to feed their families
- scientists discovering connections with soil that can help reduce global warming including ways to generate electricity from soils and sediments
- inmates finding inner peace and job skills in a prison horticulture program
- children uncovering the secrets of soil fertility and eating from edible schoolyards.

Dirt! The Movie uncovers the surprising ways we can repair our relationship with dirt and create new possibilities for all life on earth. You may never look at the ground beneath your feet quite the same.



FILMMAKER COMMENTS

When Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow decided to make the documentary *Dirt! The Movie*, they knew they would not make a traditional soil science documentary.

“Dirt is a living engine for life on Earth,” says Benenson. “It recycles everything that falls to the ground. If we didn’t have a living skin on the Earth, we wouldn’t exist.”

“We are treating dirt as a story, not a topic,” Rosow adds. “We want people to start off with an emotional connection to dirt. Then we want to instill a sense of caution about the destructive things we are doing to nature and dirt and how those behaviors impact our daily lives.”

The genesis for the film came when Benenson was given a copy of William Bryant Logan’s book *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, in which Logan wrote a series of essays that elevated dirt to a new level of importance by looking at the numerous roles dirt plays in everyday life. Benenson was intrigued, and shared it with Rosow, a former student of biochemistry, cellular physiology and ecology.

“After reading the book, I realized how out of touch I had become with the ground beneath my feet. Like most city people, I take dirt for granted,” Rosow says.

“The challenge for a filmmaker was, how do you make this subject interesting?” Benenson adds. “We try to give people hope and empower them to see the possibilities and their potential to change things.”

Benenson and Rosow want *Dirt! The Movie* to play a role in educational outreach as well. The film and its website, www.dirtthemovie.org, link viewers with a variety of activists and environmental organizations. These groups and sites offer practical information on being part of the solution. “It’s all about sustainability,” Benenson says.



PRODUCTION HISTORY

Over the three years of location filming for *Dirt! The Movie*, directors Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow got a little dirty. In that time, they filmed in more than 20 locations, including Argentina, Brazil, France, India, Kenya, and several regions of the United States.

The choice of locations was driven by a desire to interview the renowned global visionaries who are leading the charge to repair this natural resource.

Bill Logan, the author of the book from which the film takes its inspiration, worked with the team on several occasions, leading them to a fish composting center in Maine, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, the Land Institute in Kansas, before pointing the way to Chimayo, New Mexico.

Dirt! The Movie travelled to the Rikers Island prison system in New York City, the largest penal colony in the world, with 14,000 inmates, 10 jails -and two gardens. Of the thousands of prisoners who serve their sentences within its gray walls, a select group of men and women are given the chance to learn about dirt.

Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, led the production to Kenya, where her Green Belt Movement inspires a group of courageous women to save their forests in the face of daily civil strife.

To interview Dr. Vandana Shiva about her fight to prevent world hunger by preserving biodiversity, *Dirt! The Movie* traveled throughout India, to a world the tourists rarely see. As thousands of farmers trapped in the loan economy see suicide as their only solution, Vandana Shiva’s commitment to preserving the seeds of the region offers them a sustainable future providing support for organic farmers.

In order to document Pierre Rabhi's lifelong dedication to reverse the worldwide trend toward desertification, Dirt! The Movie traveled in the dry August heat to France to capture his philosophy in action.

In the southern region of Brazil, renowned photographer Sebastião and his wife Lélia Salgado refused to stand idly by as they realized they were documenting a connection between environmental degradation and human degradation. Their efforts to revitalize the land at Instituto Terra by planting a million trees and engaging the community in their vision proves that dirt can be brought back to life even in the worst of circumstances.

Dirt! The Movie filmed in Los Angeles with TreePeople founder Andy Lipkis who showed them that the city was not a dead piece of inert concrete, but rather a living and potentially thriving community for both humans and dirt.

To bring these stories to life in a cinematic way, Dirt! The Movie also produced animated sequences to illuminate the topic in a multilayered, engaging fashion.

"This film is not about environmental disasters. It's about environmental potential," Benenson says. "There are a variety of solutions to the problems we face. There's a lot of hope for the future, if we come back into balance with dirt."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

GENE ROSOW (director-producer) Gene Rosow is an accomplished filmmaker. During his more than 30 years in the industry, Rosow has written, directed and produced more than 20 documentaries, including *Doctora* for England's Channel 4, *Routes of Rhythm* with Harry Belafonte for PBS and *Knights* for Canal + France. Rosow's feature film producing credits include *Silent Tongue*, *Zeus and Roxanne*, *Britney Baby* *One More Time* among others.

Apart from filmmaking, Rosow has a Ph.D in history from the University of California at Berkeley where he also taught and spent a year of post-graduate work at the University of Southern California in ecology, biochemistry, cellular physiology and parasitology.

BILL BENENSON (director-producer) Bill Benenson is an award-winning filmmaker. In over 30 years of producing and directing, he has made several documentaries, including *The Marginal Way* about the fishing and artist community of Ogunquit, Maine, and *Diamond Rivers*, a first-person account of diamond prospecting in northeastern Brazil. Both were PBS specials broadcast on New York's WNET.

With Benenson Productions and its predecessor, BBZ Films, Benenson was a development executive, producer or executive producer on several feature films, including *Under the Volcano*, *The Lightship* and *A Walk On The Moon*. In addition, Benenson was executive producer on *Mister Johnson*.

LAURIE BENENSON (executive producer) Laurie Benenson is a writer, editor and journalist. She founded *Movieline Magazine* in 1985 and went on to write about film and television for the *New York Times Sunday Arts and Leisure* section. An avid environmentalist, Laurie is on the action forum of the NRDC and is also involved with *Rainforest Action Network* and *Conservation International*, among other environmental groups. Laurie has written a screenplay about pioneering environmentalist Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, and is currently working on a rewrite of her romantic comedy *Genie*. *Dirt! The Movie* is her debut as a producer.

ELEONORE DAILLY (producer, co-director) Eleonore Dailly, in 2007, received the prestigious *Debra Hill Fellowship* for promising, young female producers. That accolade came on the heels of Dailly's two-year training at the University of Southern California's *Peter Stark Producing Program*. Dailly wrote, directed and produced her first feature-length documentary *Las Inombrables*, a poignant and intimate portrait of Argentine streetwalkers' struggle for their rights as women. The film is in final stages of post-production.

JONATHAN SHAW (editor) Jonathan Shaw is an editor with a storied pedigree, working in features, television, documentaries, IMAX and 3-D. Shaw has collaborated with some of the most innovative filmmakers of our time, including David Lynch ("*Blue Velvet*," "*Twin Peaks*") and Steven Bochco ("*Blind Justice*," "*Over There*," "*Raising the Bar*"). Shaw also has worked on several IMAX and 3-D projects, such as "*Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure*," "*China: The Panda Adventure*" and "*T-Rex: Back to the Cretaceous*."

BRIAN SINGBIEL (editor) Brian Singbiel taught himself the basics of editing on two VHS decks in the basement of his suburban home near Detroit. He received a formal film education in the Los Angeles area at Chapman University, earning a student nomination at the 2003 A.C.E. Eddie Awards. After graduating, Singbiel traveled to New York City and was mentored by Kurt Engfehr on the fashion documentary *Seamless*. Singbiel honed his craft by editing short films, spec commercials and music videos, while assisting established editors on feature documentaries such as *America the Beautiful* and narrative films including Nick Cassavetes' *Alpha Dog*. Singbiel's first feature documentary as lead editor was the Sundance hit *Bigger, Stronger, Faster*. Singbiel's other editing work includes *Mad As Hell: The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder*, legendary prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi's case for holding President Bush "criminally responsible" for the deaths of American soldiers in Iraq, and *Fambul Tok*, an intimate look at forgiveness and reconciliation after the civil war in Sierra Leone.

TRACY J. BROWN (associate producer) Tracy J. Brown is a screenwriter and former development executive whose writing credits include the delightful animated feature film "A Fish Tale". Her basic training in ecological awareness came from years with her hands in the dirt alongside her grandmother, horticulturalist and author Emily Brown (*Gardening With Perennials*). Tracy's first foray into environmental research was a college paper about thermal pollution and its effect on aquatic ecosystems with research assistance from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. She has since written a screenplay about *Silent Spring* author Rachel Carson and her courageous call to battle for the environment and all of its creatures.

MARISA MURGATROYD (associate producer) Marisa is an award-winning filmmaker, writer, and photographer specializing in social issue media. Dedicated to producing innovative media focused on real world issues, she has brought her creative and organizational skills to a wide array of video, print and online projects. Marisa has worked in the development, production, outreach and distribution of documentary films on issues ranging from sustainable development to substance abuse. Most recently, she wrote, produced and directed *Meth Inside Out*, an educational video series on methamphetamine addiction and recovery.

CHRISTINE DEITNER (associate producer) Christine Deitner received her B.F.A. in Theatre Directing and Acting from New York University where she also received minors in English and Film Studies. She has directed plays in New York and Northampton, Massachusetts, stage and company managed professional theatrical tours throughout North America and Europe, tour managed small bands in the United States and produced short films and theatrical ventures in New York and Los Angeles. Upon moving West, she leapt at the chance to work for Producer Richard Raynis and Gracie Films as Production Coordinator on *The Simpsons Movie* and *The Simpsons Game* for EA. She continued working with Film Roman as Production Supervisor for *The Simpsons Ride* at Universal Studios, and for Rob Zombie's *The Haunted World of El Superbeasto*, to be released in 2009.

TYLER HARBOUR (associate producer) Tyler Harbour received his B.A. in English at Brevard College and then attended Marshall University's English Graduate Program before moving to California in 2006. Since relocating to Los Angeles, Tyler has worked on numerous short and feature length projects, as a casting assistant on *Opposite Day*, as well as producing his own short film, *Black Rock*, in 2007.

STEVE ELKINS (director of photography) Steve Elkins is a veteran cinematographer, editor and producer. He has also garnered several awards, including a California Tourism Award for best video, a Cine Golden Eagle for best documentary and best videography and editing and an Emmy for best documentary camerawork.

TOM PAKULSKI (director of photography Maine and India) Tom Pakulski is a cameraman with over 20 years of experience. He has shot for Discovery Channel (Sunrise Earth, Daily Planet and Some Assembly Required) and the History Channel (Modern Marvels and Deep Sea Detectives).

ANTONIO ROSSI (director of photography) Antonio Rossi was the director of photography on the documentary No End In Sight, a comprehensive study at the events and decisions that lead to fiasco in Iraq. The film won the Special Jury Prize in the U.S. documentary competition at the Sundance Film Festival in 2007. It was also nominated for an Academy Award. Rossi has worked with such distinguished filmmakers as Michael Apted, Ken Burns, Alex Gibney Barbara Koppel and Brett Morgen throughout his career, including time as a camera assistant and gaffer in New York's independent and documentary film communities.

MICHAEL KOWALSKI (sound design) Michael Kowalski has worked as a sound designer on a variety of documentaries (Lost in La Mancha, A Certain Kind of Death, Tell Them Who You Are) and independent, narrative films (Robbing Peter). In addition to his film work, Kowalski teaches sound design and film production at Chapman University Near Los Angeles.

JORGE CORANTE (composer) Jorge Corante creates unique scores that seamlessly blend urban elements with classical and electronica. His music career began when he was 17 years old and signed a production deal with Motown Records. A year later Corante signed a co-publishing deal with EMI Music. During his time with EMI Corante wrote and produced songs for Paula Abdul, Brownstone, Adina Howard, Xscape, K-Ci & JoJo, CeCe Peniston, Janet Jackson, Outkast and Deborah Cox. At the end of his EMI publishing term, Cornate embarked on a successful career composing music and writing songs for such films as Scary Movie 3, Jump In!, The Proud Family Movie, Big Momma's House 2 and the television show CSI: Miami among others.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS



Jamie Lee Curtis, Actress/Author

Jamie Lee Curtis has demonstrated her versatility as a film actress with starring roles in such acclaimed films as the blockbuster *True Lies* opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger, for which she won a Golden Globe Award, as well as an American comedy Award, and *Trading Places* with Eddie Murphy and Dan Aykroyd for which she earned a BAFTA (British Film Academy Award) for Best Supporting Actress.

Jamie will next be seen in the Disney comedy *You Again* which is set for release in 2010. She starred in Disney's box office hit *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* in addition to *Christmas with the Kranks* with Tim Allen and the Disney feature film "*Freaky Friday*" for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe. She also appeared in the drama *The Tailor of Panama* along with Pierce Brosnan and Geoffrey Rush, as well as *Halloween: H20*, which was the 20 year sequel to *Halloween*; the now classic film which first brought her to the attention of audiences worldwide. Other memorable leading film role performances include, *A Fish Called Wanda* (for which she received dual nominations with BAFTA and the Golden Globes), *Fierce Creatures*, *Virus*, *Dominick And Eugene*, *Blue Steel*, *My Girl*, *My Girl II*, *Forever Young*, *Mother's Boys*, *House Arrest* and *Love Letters*.

In television, Ms. Curtis co-starred opposite Richard Lewis in the acclaimed sitcom *Anything But Love* which earned her both a Golden Globe and People's Choice Award, as well as TNT's adaptation of the Wendy Wasserstein play *The Heidi Chronicles* which also earned her a Golden Globe nomination. In 1998, Jamie starred in the CBS television film *Nicholas' Gift* for which she received an Emmy nomination.

Ms. Curtis is also a best-selling author of children's books. Her titles include, *When I Was Little: A Four-Year Old's Memoir of Her Youth*, *Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born*, *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day*, *I'm Gonna Like Me*, *Where Do Balloons Go?* *It's Hard To Be Five* and *Is There Really a Human Race?* Her latest book *Big Words for Little People* was released in September and is already a best seller.

Ms. Curtis is an AIDS activist and has a deep and active connection to many children's charities which include, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, as well as being the official spokesperson for CAAF(The Children's Affected by AIDS Foundation) and on whose executive Advisory Board she is a serving member. In addition, she is also on the board of the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation.



BILL LOGAN Author, *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, and Urban Arborist

Bill Logan is an award-winning natural history writer and environmental columnist. He wrote the Cuttings column for the New York Times and helped launch Garden Design magazine. Logan has been a contributor to numerous magazines including HG, House Beautiful, Organic Gardening, The Whole Earth Review, Parabola, Orion, Horticulture and Fine Gardening. His book on gardening tools won the Best Book of the Year award from the Garden Writers Association of America.

In 1992, Logan founded Urban Arborists to care for trees in New York City. Three years later, *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, was published. It was named Book of the Week by Entertainment Weekly and received a glowing front-page review in the Sunday Los Angeles Times Book Review section. Logan's most recent book, *Oak: The Frame of Civilization*, was published in 2008 by W.W. Norton.

"The Dust Bowl was an event, not quite on the same scale, but comparable to what happened after the last Ice Age. We made a really big change in the landscape just by bad farming practices." – Bill Logan, *Dirt! The Movie*



ANDY LIPKIS President, Founder of TreePeople

Andy Lipkis began planting trees to rehabilitate smog and fire-damaged forests when he was 15 years old. He founded TreePeople and has served as its president since 1973.

For over three decades, the Los Angeles-based organization has served as a guiding light for the Citizen Forestry Movement. Lipkis' latest venture, the T.R.E.E.S. program (Transagency Resources for Environmental and Economic Sustainability), is a public-private partnership aimed at managing the greater Los Angeles area as an urban ecosystem. Lipkis inspired the planting of one million trees in Los Angeles preceding the 1984 Summer Olympics.

Lipkis and his wife Kate were named to the United Nations Environment Program's Global 500 Roll of Honor, and hold American Forests' Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1998, Andy was honored as Founder of the Year at National Philanthropy Day, and two years later, he and Kate authored *The Simple Act of Planting A Tree*. In 2005, Andy wrote the call to action for the 20th anniversary release of the Jean Giono book "The Man Who Planted Trees."

"Dirt! The Movie opens our eyes to the science and healing power of a world right beneath our feet. It inspires us to engage and enjoy getting our hands dirty, while providing real hope in perilous times." – Andy Lipkis



WANGARI MAATHAI Nobel Laureate and Founder, Green Belt Movement

Wangari Maathai is internationally recognized for her persistent struggle in the fight for democracy, human rights and environmental conservation. Born in Nyeri, Kenya, Professor Maathai was the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree. In 1976, as the chair of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy at the University of Nairobi, Professor Maathai started a tree-planting initiative. Her initiative grew into a broad-based, grassroots organization called the Green Belt Movement, whose main focus is planting trees with women's groups to both conserve the environment and improve Kenyans' quality of life dramatically. Since then, the Pan African Green Belt Network has launched similar tree planting initiatives in other African countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

A visiting Fellow at Yale University's Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry, Professor Maathai serves on the boards of numerous organizations, including the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament. Her accomplishments include an appointment as Kenya's Assistant Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife and a presidency of the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

Through the Green Belt Movement, Professor Maathai has assisted in planting more than 20 million trees across Africa, receiving numerous awards, most notably the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

"Clothe the earth -put on the skin, a dress. A green dress, like trees, like vegetation. And then, when the earth is covered with green, with vegetation, it looks very

beautiful. And in this age of climate change can you imagine how happy the planet would be?" – Wangari Maathai, Dirt! The Movie



DR. VANDANA SHIVA Physicist, Environmental Activist

Vandana Shiva is a world-renowned environmental leader and thinker. Director of the Research Foundation on Science, Technology, and Ecology, she is the author of many books, including *Water Wars: Pollution, Profits, and Privatization*, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, and *Staying Alive*.

Dr. Shiva – along with Ralph Nader and Jeremy Rifkin – is a leader in the International Forum on Globalization. In 1993, Dr. Shiva won the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize, “The Right Livelihood Award.”

The founder of Navdanya (“nine seeds”), a movement promoting diversity and use of native seeds, Dr. Shiva, in 1997, also set up the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology. Its studies have validated the ecological value of traditional farming and been instrumental in fighting destructive development projects in India. Before becoming an ecoactivist, Dr. Shiva was one of India’s leading physicists. She holds a master’s degree in the philosophy of science and a Ph.D. in particle physics.

“For us, mud is not just the matrix of life in which we grow our plants, it’s our building structure – it’s our very sense of who we are.” – Dr. Vandana Shiva, *Dirt! The Movie*



SEBASTIAO SALGADO Documentary Photojournalist and Co-Founder, Instituto Terra

Sebastião Salgado worked as an economist for the International Coffee Organization, often traveling to Africa on missions for the World Bank. In 1973, Salgado switched to photography, working on news assignments before veering to documentary work.

Today, Sebastião Salgado is one of the most respected photojournalists in the world, his reputation forged by decades of dedication and powerful black and white images

of dispossessed and distressed people taken in places where most wouldn't dare to go. His images artfully teach us the disastrous effects of war, poverty, disease, and hostile climatic conditions.

In 1999, appalled by the relation between human degradation and environmental degradation, Lélia Deluiz Wanick Salgado and Sebastião Salgado founded Instituto Terra, a nonprofit organization based in their home town of Aimores, Brazil. Designed to preserve and promote the biodiversity of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest, Instituto Terra has become a center of excellence in the areas of restoration, environmental education, sustainable development and social mobilization.

LELIA DELUIZ WANICK SALGADO Co-Founder, Instituto Terra

Lélia was born in Vitória, Brazil, and moved to Paris in 1969. Lélia runs Amazonas Images, the photography agency she created with Sebastião and has designed and curated numerous exhibitions of Sebastião's photographs in major museums and galleries throughout the world. She has degrees in architecture from Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and in Urban Planning from the University of Paris.

She is the President and Co-Founder of Instituto Terra.

"In all this land around this planet, if we started to replant – in ten years there would be no more dead land." – Sebastião Salgado, Dirt! The Movie



PAUL STAMETS Mycologist

Paul Stamets has been a dedicated mycologist for over 30 years. During this time, he has discovered and coauthored four new species of mushrooms and pioneered countless techniques in the field of edible and medicinal mushroom cultivation.

Stamets has written six books on mushroom cultivation, use and identification; his books Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms and The Mushroom Cultivator have been hailed as the definitive texts of mushroom cultivation. His newest book is Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save The World.

In 2008, Paul received the National Geographic Adventure Magazine's Green-Novator and the Argosy Foundation's E-chievement Awards.

"These old growth forests come from the soil that's so thin beneath my feet. The soil originated after the last ice age over 10,000 years ago, when the glaciers receded and scraped away most of the soil down to barren rock... Mmmm... That smells good, it really does– Paul Stamets, Dirt! The Movie



MIGUEL ALTIERI Professor of Agroecology, University of California at Berkeley

Miguel Altieri has been teaching Agroecology -the relation between agricultural crops and the environment -at the University of California at Berkeley since 1981 in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management. Professor Altieri, who was born in Chile, is particularly interested in how the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment affect agricultural systems in Central and South America.

He has served as a scientific advisor to many prominent NGOs, including the Latin American Consortium on Agroecology and Development (CLADES), the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research and the FAO-GIAHS program (Globally Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems) a program devoted to identifying and dynamically conserving traditional farming systems in the developing world. He also served as General Coordinator for the United Nations Development Program's Sustainable Agriculture Networking and Extension. Professor Altieri is also the general coordinator of the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (www.agroeco.org/socla).

Professor Altieri is the author of more than 200 publications, and numerous books including *Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity*, *Pest Management in Agroecosystems* and *Agroecology and the Search for a Truly Sustainable Agriculture*.

“If we don't take care of the soil which is just the first five centimeter layer of life that is on the earth, our future is totally condemned.” – Miguel Altieri, *Dirt! The Movie*



PIERRE RABHI Philosopher, Agroecologist

Farmer turned philosopher, Pierre Rabhi has worked relentlessly to build awareness of the interrelationship between people and the environment. A prolific writer, Rabhi explores this intricate relationship in all of his acclaimed books,

including *As in the Heart, So in the Earth; Reversing the Desertification of the Soul and the Soil*; *Words of the Earth: An African Initiation and The Humming Bird*.

“Here’s this 120-year window in which we find ourselves and it’s probably the most important window in the history of homosapien.” – Wes Jackson, *Dirt! The Movie*

Putting his words in action, Rabhi has promoted the development of agro-ecology around the world, particularly - though not exclusively - in arid countries. In 1981, Rabhi was invited by the government of Burkina Faso to share his discoveries with struggling African farmers. He also started numerous development programs in Morocco, Palestine, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Mauritania, Nigeria, Mali, Poland and the Ukraine.

In 1997 and 1998, at the request of the United Nations, Rabhi presented proposals for the implementation of his plan for world sustainability. He founded the “International Movement for Earth and Humanism.” Rabhi is also vice president of the Kokopelli Association, which protects biodiversity with the production and distribution of organically and biodynamically grown seeds, and promotes the regeneration of cultivated soils.

“Africa is not poor. Ethiopia alone, if properly cultivated, could feed the entire African continent.” – Pierre Rabhi, *Dirt! The Movie*



WES JACKSON President, The Land Institute

President of The Land Institute, Jackson earned a BA in Biology from Kansas Wesleyan, an MA in Botany from University of Kansas, and a PhD in Genetics from North Carolina State University. He established and served as chair of one of the country's first environmental studies programs at California State University-Sacramento and then returned to his native Kansas to found The Land Institute in 1976. He is the author of several books including *New Roots for Agriculture* and *Becoming Native to This Place* and is widely recognized as a leader in the international movement for a more sustainable agriculture. He was a 1990 Pew Conservation Scholar, in 1992 became a MacArthur Fellow, and in 2000 received the Right Livelihood Award (called the “alternative Nobel prize”).

In 2005 he was honored by Smithsonian Magazine as one of the 35 innovators who made a difference – a list that also included Bill Gates, Frank Gehry, Maya Angelou, Yo-Yo Ma and Annie Liebowitz.



DAVID ORR Professor, Environmental Studies, Oberlin College

David W. Orr is the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics and Chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Oberlin College. He is also a James Marsh Professor at Large at the University of Vermont.

He is the author of several influential books: *Design on the Edge: The Making of a High Performance Building*, *The Last Refuge: Patriotism, Politics, and the Environment* and *The Nature of Design* (Oxford, 2002.) He has published 150 articles in scientific journals, social science publications, and popular magazines. He has lectured at hundreds of colleges and universities in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Orr is the recipient of a Bioneers Award (2003), a National Conservation Achievement Award by the National Wildlife Federation, a Lyndhurst Prize awarded by the Lyndhurst Foundation “to recognize the educational, cultural, and charitable activities of particular individuals of exceptional talent, character, and moral vision.” He was named “an Environmental Hero for 2004” by *Interiors & Sources Magazine*, holds three Honorary Doctorates and has been a distinguished scholar in residence at University of Washington, Ball State University and Westminster College in Salt Lake City. In a special citation, the Connecticut General Assembly noted Orr's “vision, dedication, and personal passion” in promoting the principles of sustainability. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* described him as “one of those who will shape our lives.”

“This is a fabric of life being torn apart that can never be put back together again.” – David Orr, *Dirt! The Movie*



MAJORA CARTER Founder, Sustainable South Bronx

Born, raised and residing in the South Bronx, NY, Carter believes residents shouldn't have to move out of their neighborhood to live in a better one. She is committed to creating intensive urban forestation with green roofing and water permeable open spaces. This robust horticultural infrastructure cleans the air, reduces the urban-heat island effect, efficiently manages storm water runoff and creates jobs.

In 2001, Carter founded the nonprofit, environmental-justice solutions corporation, Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx). Carter's first major project was writing a \$1.25 million federal transportation planning grant for the South Bronx Greenway, which led to the area's first new waterfront park in over 60 years. Two years later, SSBx opened the Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training program (BEST) -one of the nation's first urban green-collar job training and placement systems. After 5 years, it boasts an 85% employment rate. Carter's local environmental solutions rest on poverty alleviation through green economic development; the local jobs they create can empower communities to resist bad environmental decisions.

Carter is a 2006 MacArthur Genius Fellow, one of Essence Magazine's 25 most influential African Americans, one the New York Post's 50 Most Influential Women for the past two years, co-host of The Green on Sundance Channel, and a board member of the Wilderness Society. She is also president of the green-collar economic consulting company, The Majora Carter Group, LLC.

"You don't have to move out of your neighborhood to live in a better one but you sure do have to fight if you want to reconnect your life into a more natural state that actually includes poor people." – Majora Carter, Dirt! The Movie



JAMES JILER Program Director, The Greenhouse at Rikers Island Prison Systems

Author James Jiler has directed the Horticultural Society of New York's jail-to-street GreenHouse program on Rikers Island since the program's inception in 1997. Jiler, with a background in forestry and social ecology, holds an MS degree.

James Jiler is Director of the Greenhouse Project, a renowned horticultural job-training program for inmates at New York City's Rikers Island jail system. He provides instruction in horticulture and greenhouse management integrated with a

math, science and English literacy curriculum. Jiler also oversees job placement and after-care services for released inmates while directing the GreenTeam.

“When we talk about dirt, we’re not just talking about dirt, we’re talking about the spiritual as well as the physical attributes of one’s life, so it’s no longer dirt, it’s a metaphor for a healthy life.” – James Jiler, *Dirt! The Movie*



FRITJOF CAPRA Director of Center for Ecoliteracy, Theoretical Physicist

Fritjof Capra has published many technical papers and lectured extensively on the philosophical implications of modern science. His most notable works include *The Tao of Physics* (1975), *The Turning Point* (1982) and *The Web of Life* (1997). Capra is also a visiting lecturer at Schumacher College in England and director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, which is dedicated to nurturing new ecological visions and applying them to current social, economic and environmental problems.

“The living organisms on earth have used the very same molecules of air, water and soil over and over again. Not just the same types of molecules but the very same molecules.” – Fritjof Capra, *Dirt! The Movie*



PETER GIRGUIIS Assistant Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard

Peter Girguis is an assistant professor of microbiology at Harvard University, and his research focuses on microbes that live in extreme environments. He is involved in developing microbial fuel cells as power systems in both the developed and developing world. He is also known for designing state-of-the-art bioreactors to grow the so-called “unculturable” microbes, including anaerobic methane oxidizing archaea and sulfur-reducing bacteria. He received his B.S.c from UCLA, his Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara, and did postdoctoral work at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

“What we often call dirt, you know, the stuff you are trying to wash off our car or wash off our driveways, are really these soils and sediments that are vital to keeping our biosphere healthy, which is all about keeping the plants and animals and ourselves alive. Soils and sediments are really more like a living skin on the earth, and they are the stewards of our planet.” – Peter Girguis, *Dirt! The Movie*



ALICE WATERS Founder, The Edible Schoolyard

In 1971, after graduating from the University of California at Berkeley and training at the Montessori School in London, Waters opened Chez Panisse with a fixed-price menu that changed daily. The menu format is the heart of Waters’ philosophy of serving only the highest quality products, only when they are in season. Over its more than three decades of existence, Chez Panisse has developed a network of mostly local farmers and ranchers whose dedication to sustainable agriculture assures Chez Panisse a steady supply of pure and fresh ingredients.

In 1997, Waters helped launch the Edible Schoolyard on the campus of the local Martin Luther King Jr., Middle School. On the one-acre plot, students not only raise fruits and vegetables but also learn about food production and preparation in gardening and cooking classes.

Waters has authored and co-authored eight food-related books. In 2001, Chez Panisse was named Best Restaurant in America by *Gourmet* magazine. Waters has received numerous awards, including the *Bon Appetit* magazine’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 and the James Beard Humanitarian Award in 1997. She was named Best Chef in America by the James Beard Foundation in 1992 and *Cuisine et Vins de France* listed her as one of the world’s 10 best chefs in 1986. Alice Waters is a strong advocate for farmer’s markets and for sound and sustainable agriculture.

“The experience in nature is so comforting to these kids who have never had their hands in the ground before. They just need to be here. They want to be in the garden.” – Alice Waters, *Dirt! The Movie*



GARY VAYNERCHUCK Host, WineLibrary.TV

Gary Vaynerchuk is a 32-year-old self-trained wine expert. His webcast, “The Thunder Show”, on www.winelibrarytv.com, attracts over 80,000 viewers each day. Gary’s cult-like following is the result of his unconventional, often irreverent commentary on wine. In the name of “expanding one’s palate”, Gary convinced Conan O’Brien to lick salted rocks and shared samples of dirt and grass with Ellen Degeneres. He routinely pans popular wines. At age 27, Vaynerchuk was the youngest winner of Marketwatch’s Business Award, Market Watch Leader, and has recently launched first book, *101 Wines Guaranteed to Inspire, Delight, and Bring Thunder to Your World*.

“With the amount of species that live in a teaspoon of dirt, I think it's very obvious dirt might be more alive than we are.” - Gary Vaynerchuk, *Dirt! The Movie*



JANINE BENYUS Founder, The Biomimicry Institute

Janine Benyus is a natural sciences writer, innovation consultant and author. In her latest book, *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired By Nature*, Benyus coined the term biomimicry to identify an emerging discipline of bio-inspired innovation, for example, solar cells that mimic leaves. David Perlman of the San Francisco Chronicle called the book *Biomimicry* “one viable answer to the wake-up call that Rachel Carson sounded a generation ago in *Silent Spring*.”

Since the book’s 1997 release, Benyus has evolved the practice of biomimicry by consulting with sustainable business, academic and government leaders, founding the nonprofit Biomimicry Institute and serving on the Eco-Dream Team at Interface, Inc.

In addition to her biomimicry work, Benyus teaches interpretive writing, lectures at the University of Montana, and restores and protects wild lands. She serves on a number of Montana-based, land-use committees and is president of Living Education, a nonprofit organization dedicated to place-based living and learning. Benyus has received several awards including the Rachel Carson Environmental Ethics Award, the Lud Browman Award for Science Writing, the Science Writing in

Society Journalism Award and the Barrows and Heinz Distinguished Lectureships.

“Our wealth is imaginary. It comes from soil”– Janine Benyus, Dirt! The Movie



John Todd is a Buckminster Fuller 2008 Challenge-winning biologist working in the field of ecological design. His principal interests include solving the problems of food production and waste-water processing.

During the 1970s, Todd and his colleagues at Spry Point on Prince Edward Island applied biological science to technology and developed what they called “living machines,” a self-contained, innovative treatment system designed to treat a specific waste stream using the principles of ecological engineering. It achieved this goal with diverse communities of bacteria and other microorganisms, algae, plants, trees, snails, fish and other living creatures working symbiotically. In 1990, Todd developed a greenhouse waste treatment plant in Cape Cod that yields clean water from sewage.

Todd has received numerous awards, including in 1996, the Environmental Merit Award from the Environmental Protection Agency in 1996 and, the Bioneers Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998.

“Dirt is very much alive. It probably has in it and around it all of the kingdoms of life.” – John Todd, Dirt! The Movie