

Vinson Valega “Biophilia” Essay

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## Biophilia

We are in love with life and can't get enough of it! Life forms fascinate us and nature beckons with its mind-blowing “Wow!” factor as we experience first-hand its every possible shape, size, color, smell, and feel. We contribute money to preserve it and we even watch it on TV. This elemental human phenomenon was described eloquently in a 1984 book by the great socio-biologist, E.O. Wilson, entitled “Biophilia,” where he details our “innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes.” Because we came out of evolution's rich tapestry, we are quite naturally inclined to both enjoy it *and* conquer it. And it is this latter part of the equation that Wilson warned us about 25 years ago: “We cannot exist in this paradise without the machine that tears it apart. We are killing the thing we love.”

## The Glaciers are Melting

It is undeniable that human activity is increasing the average temperature of our beloved planet. The top of the globe is warning us that something is not right: the glaciers are melting, the Northeast Passage on the North Pole is open for commercial vessels for the first time in human history, and it has never been warmer in the past 2000 years than it is now. Most unequivocal of all, though, are the carbon levels (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere:

Over the past 600,000 years, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> measured during cold times was 180 parts per million (ppm); during hot times it was 280 ppm. Now? It's 380 ppm!

There is so much excess carbon in the atmosphere that it would take 200 years for it to return to pre-industrialized levels, even if we stopped emitting it completely today. We have taken it out of the ground and spewed it back into the atmosphere with disastrous effects. If we don't address this imbalance now, the planet will show no remorse when it boots us off, and we simply cannot waste any more time debating this fact.

## Save the Humans!

If the size of a football field represents the age of the planet – 4.5 billion years old – human history represents less than one-tenth of an inch on that time scale – a mere 100,000 years. This blue sphere that now gives us sustenance was here long before we arrived, and no matter how irresponsible we are, the planet will survive anything we throw at it. Indeed, it couldn't be more obvious: we need the planet while she most certainly does not need us. If we focus on that fact, we can generate true critical mass on this issue by changing the mantra from “Save the Planet” to “Save the Humans!” Only by using the most powerful force within us, our selfish gene, do we stand a chance of overcoming our short-term destructive tendencies which have gotten us into this mess. The same mind that evolved from nature and is now destroying the planet will also provide the antidote to our current suicide mission.

## Doesn't It Feel Great to be Alive?

The music on this CD is my very small contribution to the cultural heritage of our species and the swirl of life from which it came. Created and produced with this message of Biophilia in mind, I know it is but a fleeting addition to the history of this planet. I am eternally grateful for this nanosecond and am hopeful that this music will celebrate what we love most about the here and now.

I also feel incredibly lucky to be alive during this critical moment facing the human race and am very confident that we will be able to work together to preserve our planet – this wonderful place in space that has provided us the tools to think and love and create culture. Do we really have any other alternative?

Enjoy the music and thanks for listening!

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