

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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PRESS CONFERENCE

To Bee or Not to Bee:

PRE-EARTH DAY Press Conference Explores Systemic Causes and Pro-active Solutions to Recent Devastation of Honey Bee Populations in North America

DATE: April 17, 2007 (Los Angeles, CA)

TIME: 1:00pm – 3:00pm (1:00 press set up, 1:15 -2:30 keynote statements, (2:30-3pm Q&A)

LOCATION: RC Green, 300 S. La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles

PANELISTS /SPEAKERS: Renowned Oceanographer/ tipping point expert (who swayed Wal-Mart to switch to more sustainable fish), **GEORGE L. SHILLINGER**, Emmy nominated Discovery Channel Journalist/ Filmmaker, **ETHAN PROCHNIK**, Bee Keeper for over 30 years, **KIRK ANDERSON**, LA Community Bee Keeper, **ANNA BONNER MIERITZ**, Founder of the Organic Green Ambassadors, **VINCENT MAHNKE**, Nutrition Coach for Organic & Gluten Free diets, **ALANNA LEVENSON**, Cal Poly Pomona Center for Regenerative Studies PhD Candidate, **ZORA TUCKER**, Environmentally friendly furniture pioneer, **ROBERT CRAYMER**, Event Moderator and Exec. Director of Empowerment Works, **MELANIE ST.JAMES**, and finally, Concerned Citizen whose passion to raise awareness about the Bee Crisis inspired Empowerment Works to launch this event (in 2 weeks), **PATRICK BURKE**.

For Speaker Bios and Press Updates, visit: <http://www.empowermentworks.org/news.html>

National studies confirm that a 40 - 70% decline in the US Bee population may have severe national economic consequences. What repercussions would the absence of Honey Bees have on US food security? And with Earth Day just around the corner, what does this mean for our global eco-system?

Fueled by an inspired citizen's passion to spread the word, Global Sustainability Think-Tank in Action, Empowerment Works (EW), is holding a press conference titled, "Bees: The Last Threshold".

While current media coverage has raised concern over the Honey Bee "Mystery" in terms of the US agricultural industry, EW's pre-Earth Day press conference will provide more in depth analysis as well as inspire the public (and all participants) to look at this timely issue in broader social and environmental terms. Our diverse and highly qualified panel will discuss the uncertain future of the honey bees as a tipping point issue in the way we grow food and prioritize environmental issues.

Responding to the question "To Bee or Not to Bee?", we will explore NOT what honey bees can do for us, but what we can do to prevent the loss of this and other species, whose survival assures our own. Facts remain that shock us all.

- One quarter of all mammal species face extinction in 30 years. (United Nations)
- 90 per cent of all large fishes have disappeared from the world's oceans in the past half century. (Nature Magazine)

- If current trends continue, one half of all species of life on Earth will be extinct in 100 years. (E.O. Wilson, The Future of Life, p. 102)

How many species will be lost, and at what irreversible cost, before environmental impacts become the primary measurement of national and global Human Security?

EVENT FORMAT & TOPICS:

A roundtable panel discussion followed by press Q&A will give diverse participants the opportunity to contribute his or her unique perspective topics including:

1. The Honey Bee Die-Off: Is it just the tip of the iceberg? Could it be another sign that are ecosystems are under increasing strain from industrialization and the rapid economic development that has radically altered ecosystems and puts their ability to sustain current agricultural production levels in serious doubt.
2. The recent speculation that the honeybee depopulation was induced by human activity such as pesticide use, Genetically Modified Organisms and a combination of factors such as mites viruses etc.
3. Possible solutions: Is this issue more evidence of the need to make a rapid and fundamental shift in how we grow our food;
4. The linkages between what's good for the honey bees' diet and ours. Monoculture based foods like wheat, corn are cheap to produce but carry a price tag, namely human health issues and honey bee malnutrition. Who is paying & how?
5. The large scale application of sustainable Organic and poly-culture-based (apposed to single crop) farming systems. Integrated farming and permaculture can help to return ecosystems back to health, minimizing the impact that unsustainable farming and development practices may have on rapid species declines (as we are now experiencing with the honey bee).
6. What is the "responsible" role OR burden of media in the context of the environment? Whose job is it to make Biodiversity tipping points a national priority or a top story? Would any one watch if they did? How can advocacy and research groups collaborate with the media to facilitate public awareness of issues of public importance vs. interest (i.e. Climate Change vs. Celebrity Paternity Tests)?

OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSIBLE MEDIA SERIES:

As part of Empowerment Works' mission to foster community-based solutions to the most critical challenges of our time, this will be the first of EW's Responsible Media Series, providing a unique informational forum for journalism responding to and highlighting issues of greater social and global relevance. Calling upon media to empower the public to make informed choices, this mutual exchange of citizens, educators and diverse experts responds to the eternally evolving question, "What is the 'responsible' role of media in the context of _____? This time it is bees, biodiversity and food Security. Next it will be medical ethics in our healthcare system. Stay tuned & stay inspired. www.empowermentworks.org

RECENT STUDIES AND FINDINGS ON BEE SYNDROME AND RELATED TOPICS:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070407/ts_alt_afp/sciencenaturebeesus_070407020928

<http://www.earthfiles333.com/earthfiles/Episode12mp3.html>

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/03/10/HOG5FOH9VQ1.DTL&hw=honeybee&sn=010&sc=388>

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media_briefing/bayerspesticides.pdf

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