OurBlueOrb.Org Monthly Environmental News Briefing
November 2026
All THE Environmental News That Matters

There is no shortage of environmental news. There is a shortage of people paying attention to it.

November showed what attention can do. Voters decided environmental questions at the ballot box, from data centers to wildlife, land and transit. Opponents of data center projects won 40 of 41 local ballot measures. A court kept its block on mining at Mojave National Preserve. Researchers found right whale calves, oysters breeding in Scotland again, and beavers back at Loch Ness.

The same month brought hard news. October was the warmest October on record. Microplastics turned up in blood, in Sierra Nevada snow and in the coral of a protected marine park. A sweeping permitting bill cleared the Senate 62-33 and now waits on the House. The Army detonated nearly five tons of lead azide in Iowa after a court delay, and soil results are still pending.

That is the Renaissance of the Environmental Movement at work, and the work is still unfinished. Attention becomes votes. Votes become decisions. Decisions become protection. It starts with people who read the news and act on it.

The OurBlueOrb.Org Monthly Environmental News Briefing exists to close that gap.

What follows is the environmental news worth your attention this month: the research, the setbacks, the breakthroughs, and the stories that demand to be heard. Read one. Read all of them. Share what moves you with everyone in your world.

A note on paywalls: some sources below are labeled "paywalled." If a link stops at a paywall, try one of these. Open the page in your browser's Reader Mode, or clear your browsing history for that site, and try again. Or type archive.ph/ in front of the article's web address, which often brings up a saved copy. Thanks to a reader for that tip.

Missed last month? https://ourblueorb.org/eNewsUpdate.10.26.pdf

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS & GOOD NEWS

Proof That Positive Action Works

1. **Virginia Unveils Data Center Accountability Framework, Targeting Diesel Backup Generators:** Governor Abigail Spanberger unveiled a Data Center Accountability Framework and signed Executive Order 22 on September 18. The order bars state agencies from entering nondisclosure agreements for data center projects, expedites new state noise regulations and directs a review of diesel and other backup generation tied to data centers. The framework calls for ending by-right approval for data centers over 25 megawatts, moving existing and future facilities to cleaner backup power and limiting on-site gas generation. Additional measures go to the 2027 General Assembly session. Office of Governor Abigail Spanberger, Sept 18, 2026: https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2026/september-releases/name-1123696-en.html; American Public Power Association, Sept 21, 2026: https://www.publicpower.org/periodical/article/virginia-governor-unveils-data-center-accountability-effort-signs-related-eo

2. **California Voters Reject Proposition 45:** California voters rejected Proposition 45, which would have limited environmental review of major projects and courts' power to weigh in on them. The Associated Press called the race Nov. 7, according to the Davis Vanguard. According to Earthjustice, the No on Prop 45 campaign was backed by more than 500 labor, housing, public health, Tribal, community and environmental groups. Earthjustice called the result a win for clean air and water and for the public's ability to check the corporations and data center developers who backed the measure. Earthjustice, Nov 9, 2026: https://earthjustice.org/press/2026/voters-choose-environmental-protection-reject-californias-proposition-45; Davis Vanguard, Nov 2026: https://davisvanguard.org/2026/11/california-proposition-45-rejected/

3. **Democrats Win Congress as Energy Costs and Data Centers Drive Voters:** Democrats won control of both the U.S. House and Senate and several state governments in the November 3 election, according to Grist.

Latitude Media says rising gasoline prices from the Iran war, higher electricity rates and community pushback against data centers drove the vote. With Congress, Democrats can investigate administration energy moves, including blocked renewable permits and canceled Department of Energy awards, starting in January. Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/; Latitude Media, Nov 4, 2026: https://www.latitudemedia.com/news/how-democrats-midterm-sweep-will-rewire-energy-and-data-center-policy/

4. **Georgia Democrats Win a Majority on the Utility Regulator:** Democrats won both Georgia Public Service Commission seats on the ballot, giving them a majority on the body that regulates Georgia Power for the first time in 30 years, according to Grist. Peter Hubbard held District 3 and Shelia Edwards won District 5. Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/; Latitude Media, Nov 4, 2026: https://www.latitudemedia.com/news/how-democrats-midterm-sweep-will-rewire-energy-and-data-center-policy/

5. **Michigan Voters Limit Utility Political Spending:** Michigan voters passed Proposal 2, which limits political spending by utilities. Grist calls it the first measure of its kind nationwide. A conservative group has sued to block it. Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/; Sierra magazine, Nov 8, 2026: https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/what-midterm-bluenami-means-climate-action-and-environmental-protection

6. **Colorado Voters Reject a Constitutional Right to Natural Gas:** Colorado voters rejected Amendment 82, which would have enshrined a right to produce and use natural gas, according to Yale Environment 360. Grist reports it won about 46% support, short of the 55% needed to pass. Yale Environment 360, Nov 4, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/midterm-elections-environmental-ballot-measures; Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/

7. **Eugene, Oregon, Approves a Clean Energy Fund:** Eugene voters approved Measure 20-388 with close to 59% of the vote, creating a Clean Energy Fund paid for by a 2% license fee on large retailers. The Sierra Club estimates the fee will raise about $15 million a year for renewable energy, efficiency, workforce development and climate resilience, with a

focus on low-income households. Sierra Club, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2026/11/beyond-candidates-voters-made-their-voices-heard-climate; Yale Environment 360, Nov 4, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/midterm-elections-environmental-ballot-measures

8. **Massachusetts Voters Approve a Nature for All Fund:** Massachusetts voters approved a Nature for All fund for conservation projects, according to Sierra magazine. Sierra magazine, Nov 8, 2026: https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/what-midterm-bluenami-means-climate-action-and-environmental-protection

9. **Data Center Opponents Win 40 of 41 Local Ballot Measures:** Data center opponents won 40 of the 41 local ballot measures on data center development, according to Ballotpedia as reported by Inside Climate News. Ohio had 21 of the measures. In Sunbury, Ohio, a referendum to ban large data centers passed 79% to 21%, targeting a proposed Amazon Web Services project, and in Pataskala voters rejected data centers 74% to 26%. Harwood, North Dakota, was the only win for developers. In Pine Island, Minnesota, Mark Lang won the mayor's race with over 60% of the vote after local outrage over a proposed Google data center, according to Grist. Inside Climate News, Nov 12, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/12112026/inside-clean-energy-election-data-center-defeats/; Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/

10. **Transit Measures Pass in the Bay Area, Colorado, Seattle and Lawrence, Kansas:** Voters approved transit measures in the Bay Area (about $1 billion per year), Colorado (Measure 7A for Front Range rail), Seattle (Prop 1, with over 70% yes) and Lawrence, Kansas, according to Grist. Grist, Nov 4, 2026: https://grist.org/elections/midterms-2026-blue-wave-climate-races-data-centers/

11. **Two Arizona Utility Commission Seats Appear to Flip as Voters Weigh Energy Costs:** Democrats Jonathon Hill and Clara Pratte appear poised to win two Arizona Corporation Commission seats held by Republicans, and both Republican candidates have conceded, according to KJZZ. The race is too close to call officially. KJZZ reports statewide polling showed growing discontent over energy bills and data centers, though it presents the link to the results as a possibility. KJZZ, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.kjzz.org/elections/2026-11-06/anger-over-energy-

costs-data-centers-may-have-propelled-several-arizona-democrats-to-victory

12. **Kenya Launches a $160 Million Conservation Program:** Kenya launched Thamani Asili, a 10-year, $160 million program targeting 17.3 million hectares of existing conservation areas and community land across 31 of its 47 counties. The government contributes $80 million, with philanthropic partners expected to match it. The program also aims to establish 2.7 million hectares of new conserved areas and is projected to benefit about 1.6 million people and create nearly 22,800 jobs. Mongabay, Nov 6, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/kenya-launches-160-million-conservation-initiative-to-support-communities-and-biodiversity/

13. **UN Names Ethiopia's Desa'a Forest Project a World Restoration Flagship:** The U.N. Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization named Ethiopia's Desa'a project a World Restoration Flagship at the biodiversity conference in Yerevan on October 29. According to WeForest, which leads the project, more than 23,000 hectares of degraded land are under restoration and soil infiltration is up 26% in restored areas since 2019. Renewed fighting in the Tigray region since late September could threaten the project. Mongabay, Nov 3, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/un-recognizes-ongoing-restoration-work-inside-ethiopias-desaa-forest-amid-conflict/

14. **Brazilian Court Orders Occupiers Out of the Piripkura Indigenous Territory:** A federal judge in Mato Grosso, Brazil, ordered people occupying the Piripkura Indigenous Territory, along with their employees, animals and machinery, to leave within 120 days. Those who remain face a daily fine of 500 reais, about $93. The territory is home to at least two Piripkura people living in voluntary isolation. The October 7 ruling reversed an earlier decision that let some occupants stay until demarcation concluded. Mongabay, Nov 2, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/ranchers-in-brazil-ordered-to-leave-home-of-indigenous-people-living-in-voluntary-isolation/

15. **China's Carbon Emissions Fall 3.1% in a Quarter:** China's carbon dioxide emissions fell 3.1% between July and September, the largest quarterly drop since the 2022 pandemic lockdowns, according to a Carbon Brief analysis reported by Yale Environment 360. Oil use dropped 4% year on year as electric cars made up two in three new passenger

vehicle sales in September. Wind, solar and nuclear additions over the period could power Germany. China is still building new coal plants. Yale Environment 360, Nov 9, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/china-emissions-iran-war

16. **Devils Hole Pupfish Rebound After Earthquakes:** A survey last month counted 137 Devils Hole pupfish, nearly double the 77 counted in spring. Earthquakes in 2024 and 2025 had reduced the endangered fish's population to fewer than 40, according to Yale Environment 360. Scientists introduced captive-raised fish and supplemental feed. Yale Environment 360, Nov 11, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/devils-hole-pupfish-rebound

17. **China's Mangroves Nearly Triple as Bird Species Multiply:** China's mangrove forests grew from about 26,000 acres in 1998 to roughly 70,000 acres in 2020, and recorded bird species in them rose from 148 to 397, according to a study in The Innovation reported by Yale Environment 360. Drivers include tree planting, new protective laws, warming that lets mangroves spread north and abandoned aquaculture ponds. The study did not separate planted from natural forest. Yale Environment 360, Nov 3, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/china-mangrove-restoration-bird-species

18. **Azores Island Switches Off Its Lights to Save Seabirds:** Corvo's lights were switched off to help fledgling Cory's shearwaters navigate by starlight, because light pollution lures them inland where they crash, according to Positive News. The Azores hold around 75% of the world's breeding population. The council planned to black out streets and public buildings for almost three weeks from October 21. Positive News, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-44-of-2026/

19. **UN Members Back a Protocol on Environmental Crime:** Members of the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime approved a resolution to develop new measures against illegal mining, wildlife trafficking and other environmental crimes, according to Positive News. The vote was 83 in favor, 27 abstaining and 12 against, including the United States. A committee will draft a protocol for the 2028 gathering. Positive News, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-44-of-2026/

20. **Lula Wins a Fourth Term and Pledges to End Amazon Deforestation by 2030:** Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva won re-election as Brazil's president and pledged to end Amazon deforestation by 2030, according to Positive News. A University of Cambridge analysis found his earlier conservation measures cut deforestation by 29% compared with his predecessor's period. Campaigners warn a more hostile Congress still threatens environmental protections. Positive News, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-44-of-2026/

21. **UK Offers Cheap Loans for Heat Pumps, Solar and Batteries:** The U.K. government made cheap or interest-free loans of up to GBP 35,000 available for heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage from an initial 10 lenders, some with 30-year repayment terms. Installing all three can save up to GBP 550 a year on energy bills, according to the government as reported by Positive News. Positive News, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-44-of-2026/

22. **London Bans Vehicles From Almost a Kilometer of Oxford Street:** Vehicles, bicycles and scooters are now banned from almost 1 km of Oxford Street in London, according to Positive News. An impact assessment projects GBP 82 million added to the local economy and 700 new jobs. Some businesses fear closures and taxi drivers warn of traffic chaos. Positive News, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-44-of-2026/

23. **Court Keeps Block on Mining at Mojave National Preserve:** A federal court kept in place an injunction blocking new mining operations at the Colosseum Mine in Mojave National Preserve, California. The injunction, first granted in August, stops grading, new drilling, bulldozing of sensitive habitat and road development while the lawsuit continues, according to Earthjustice. The court rejected requests from the Interior Department and Dateline Resources to suspend it. Earthjustice, Oct 30, 2026: https://earthjustice.org/press/2026/court-rules-to-keep-block-on-destructive-mining-development-in-mojave-national-preserve

24. **Court Rules California's First Major Carbon Capture Project Violates State Law:** Carbon TerraVault I would inject 49 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the Elk Hills oil field near Bakersfield over 26

years. The Kern County Superior Court found the county failed to fully evaluate, disclose and mitigate the project's environmental consequences under the California Environmental Quality Act and ordered it to set aside its approval, according to Earthjustice. Earthjustice, Nov 3, 2026: https://earthjustice.org/press/2026/court-rules-californias-first-major-carbon-capture-project-violates-law

25. **Netherlands Pledges $500 Million to the Tropical Forest Forever Facility:** The Netherlands pledged $500 million over 10 years to the Tropical Forest Forever Facility that Brazil launched at COP30. The facility could protect 800 to 900 million hectares of tropical forest, according to Good Good Good. Good Good Good, Nov 7, 2026: https://www.goodgoodgood.co/articles/good-news-this-week-november-7-2026

26. **Battery Storage Now Beats Gas in 43 Markets:** Four-hour battery storage is cheaper than open-cycle gas in all 43 markets modeled, and single-axis tracker solar is the cheapest new-build power in nearly all of them, according to pv magazine as reported by Good Good Good. Progress lags in North America because of tariffs, policy shifts and data center demand. Good Good Good, Oct 31, 2026: https://www.goodgoodgood.co/articles/good-news-this-week-october-31-2026

27. **Report: Everglades Restoration Accelerates, but a Water Quality Target Is Not Yet Met:** Seven Everglades projects are complete, including reservoirs east and west of Lake Okeechobee, and the pace of restoration has increased substantially over the past two years, according to a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report. Flows in Shark River Slough have increased, especially in the dry season. A new limit on nutrient pollution, largely from sugar farms south of Lake Okeechobee, has not been met based on data through water year 2025, and the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir cannot operate at full capacity until it is met for at least five years. The report also flags the loss of federal staff who handle Endangered Species Act reviews. Inside Climate News, Nov 11, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11112026/everglades-restoration-effectiveness-report/

28. **Indonesian Court Sentences Middleman to Nine Years in 3-Ton Pangolin Scale Case:** A Jakarta court sentenced middleman Tonny Tumbelaka in October to nine years in prison and a fine of 1 billion rupiah, about $55,000. Customs officials seized 3,053 kilograms of dried pangolin

scales packed in 99 boxes at Tanjung Priok port on February 18. The shipment was declared as sea cucumbers and instant noodles and was bound for Cambodia, and customs valued it at about $10.1 million. The investigation continues, according to Mongabay. Mongabay, Nov 11, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/investigation-continues-in-indonesia-after-first-conviction-in-3-ton-pangolin-trafficking-case/

29. **UN: 252 Million Hectares Now Under Active Restoration:** A U.N. Environment Programme report says 252 million hectares across 149 countries are under active restoration, an area comparable to Kazakhstan, supporting more than a million green jobs. Only 23% of degraded marine and coastal areas and 5% of freshwater ecosystems are being revived. Annual restoration investment must rise from $64 billion to $296 billion by 2030, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-45-of-2026/

30. **Portugal to Require Renewable Energy and Water-Saving Cooling at Data Centers:** New Portuguese laws due next year will require data centers to use renewable energy and water-free or non-fresh-water cooling, and to undergo environmental review. Portugal has 2.6 gigawatts of new data center capacity under development. Spain plans to require 80% clean power for facilities above 10 megawatts, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-45-of-2026/

31. **England Requires Major Infrastructure Projects to Deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain:** Nationally significant infrastructure projects in England, such as major transport, energy and water schemes, must now deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain. The government estimates this will prevent 6,000 to 10,000 hectares of habitat loss a year. The RSPB wants the rules extended because projects under 0.2 hectares remain exempt, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-45-of-2026/

32. **Short-Necked Oil Beetle Returns to Wales After About 60 Years:** Surveyors found short-necked oil beetle larvae at Castlemartin Range in Pembrokeshire, about 60 years after the species last appeared in Wales. The beetle depends on bare earth, thick vegetation and dense flowers, and its larvae feed in solitary bees' nests, according to Positive News.

Positive News, Nov 6, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-45-of-2026/

33. **The Nature Conservancy Establishes a 2,600-Acre Community Forest in Washington:** The Nature Conservancy acquired about 2,600 acres at Cle Elum Ridge in Kittitas County, Washington, and established it as the state's newest community forest. The land stays protected from development and managed as a working forest for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and hunting, along with wildlife movement and watershed health. The Conservancy and the Yakama Nation share a long-term goal of transferring ownership to the Nation. The Conservancy placed $4.1 million into a stewardship fund for annual maintenance. The Nature Conservancy, Nov 4, 2026: https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/cle-elum-community-forest/

34. **Fisheries Commission Cuts Menhaden Catch Limits, Including a 27% Cut to the Chesapeake Bay Cap:** The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Menhaden Management Board, meeting November 9 to 12 in Newport, Rhode Island, lowered the coastwide catch limit from 186,840 metric tons to 170,000 in 2027 and 155,000 in 2028. The Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap drops from 51,000 metric tons to 37,123 in 2027, a 27% reduction, and to 33,847 in 2028. The coastwide limit takes effect January 1, 2027, and the Bay cap on May 1. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation says the decision "still leaves the door wide open for the industry," and the board did not adopt seasonal quotas that supporters said would ease pressure during osprey chick-rearing, according to Inside Climate News. Inside Climate News, Nov 13, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13112026/fisheries-commission-lowers-chesapeake-bay-menhaden-cap/

35. **Researchers Identify a Previously Unknown North Atlantic Right Whale Calf Off Quebec:** Researchers in Canada photographed a calf off Anticosti Island, Quebec, in September, and scientists at the New England Aquarium in Boston identified it as a North Atlantic right whale. The discovery brings the number of calves found in the most recent birthing season to 24, according to the Associated Press as published by Mongabay. Mongabay (Associated Press), Nov 6, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/11/scientists-discovered-an-unknown-baby-right-whale-off-canada-they-say-its-a-cause-for-joy/

36. **Italy to Require Turtle-Friendly Lighting for Beach Concessions Starting in 2027:** Loggerhead turtles are expanding their nesting range west across the Mediterranean, from Calabria, Italy, toward France and Spain, and Italian beach resorts are learning to share the sand. A study published in July found 87% of nests in Campania were exposed to beachfront lighting in 2022 and 2023. The town of Ascea installed low-intensity, turtle-friendly lighting on its seafront promenade with the Anton Dohrn institute, and starting in 2027 low-impact lighting standards become mandatory for any business applying for a beach facility concession. The Life Turtlenest project, coordinated by Legambiente, links partners in Italy, Spain and France, according to Mongabay. Mongabay, Nov 6, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/as-loggerhead-turtles-spread-west-mediterranean-beach-resorts-learn-to-share-the-sand/

37. **Arnhem Sheath-Tailed Bat Found About 400 Miles From Its Last Known Sighting:** Oli Aylen, a scientist at the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, detected the call of an Arnhem sheath-tailed bat with a handheld detector during a survey at Pungalina-Seven Emu Wildlife Sanctuary, roughly 400 miles from its last known sighting. The microbat was first discovered in 1979 and is one of Australia's most rarely observed species. Aylen says it is unclear whether the bat is rare or threatened, according to Good Good Good. Good Good Good, Oct 30, 2026: https://www.goodgoodgood.co/articles/endangered-species-microbat-australia

38. **U.S. Fossil Fuel Emissions Projected to Fall This Year Despite Record Power Demand:** U.S. fossil fuel emissions are projected to fall by roughly 70 million metric tons of carbon dioxide this year, about the annual fossil fuel emissions of Peru, according to an analysis of federal data by the think tank Energy Innovation. Power demand is set to reach a record high, driven largely by data center construction. U.S. coal consumption is down 10% so far this year, even though the Trump administration scrapped coal emissions standards, directed federal funds to coal plants and delayed several plant retirements. Natural gas use is on track to stay relatively flat, as buildings use less gas with heat pump adoption and mild weather, according to Yale Environment 360. Yale Environment 360, Nov 18, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/u-s-power-emissions-2026

39. **Oxford Analysis: Climate Policies Hold Firm in 39 Countries Despite U.S. Retreat:** Researchers at Oxford University, including the Oxford Climate Policy Hub, reviewed climate laws and regulations in 39

countries that account for the bulk of global emissions. More than 800 measures were adopted. Of those, 718 remain unchanged, 45 have been delayed, 32 have been weakened and 11 have been repealed, eight of them in the U.S. The analysis finds little evidence of widespread policy retrenchment, and says policies are becoming more ambitious and covering more of the economy, with advances in Asia, Africa and Latin America, according to Yale Environment 360. Yale Environment 360, Nov 13, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/global-climate-policy

40. **Earthshot Prize Awards £1 Million Each to Five Winners in Mumbai:** The Earthshot Prize named its 2026 winners in Mumbai, India, and each receives £1 million to scale up its work. They are the Niue Ocean Wide Trust, which manages Niue's 327,000 square kilometers of ocean with 40% set aside as no-fishing zones; Bhutan, whose constitution requires at least 60% forest cover and whose Restore Bhutan program targets 50,000 hectares of degraded land by 2030; Mahindra Last Mile Mobility, which has sold more than 400,000 electric last-mile vehicles in India; Ørsted, the Danish company with more than 10 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity; and PFAS-Free France, a coalition behind a French law, in effect since January 1, 2026, that requires businesses to report PFAS pollution, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 19, 2026: https://www.positive.news/economics/torchbearers-of-a-global-movement-prince-william-celebrates-winners-of-earthshot-prize-2026/

41. **Oysters Breed in Scotland's Dornoch Firth for the First Time in Over a Century:** Oysters have bred in the Dornoch Firth for the first time in over a century. A reintroduction project began in 2017, after the species was fished to extinction there more than 100 years earlier. More than 140,000 oysters have been released, and the project aims for roughly 4 million by 2031. Heriot-Watt University led the project, supported by whisky maker Glenmorangie. Professor Bill Sanderson said, "The oysters are now reproducing," according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 20, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-47-of-2026/

42. **England's Rivers Show Falling Levels of Two PFAS Chemicals, Including a 49% Drop in Freshwater Fish:** Between 2016 and 2025, levels of the PFAS chemicals PFOS fell by 30% and PFOA by 29% in English waterways, and PFOS in freshwater fish fell by 49%, according to findings published by the Environment Agency. Experts say much more

work is needed, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 20, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-47-of-2026/

43. **Beavers Return to Loch Ness After About 400 Years:** A family of six beavers was released on the Dundreggan estate in Glenmoriston, a 10,000-acre site managed by Trees for Life. At least 15 more beaver families are due to be released in the area over the next three years. Beavers became locally extinct about 400 years ago, according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 13, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-46-of-2026/

44. **World's fastest ocean liner is sunk to break another record: largest artificial reef:** The SS United States, launched in 1951 and longer than the RMS Titanic, once transportedfour presidents, the *Mona Lisa* and a slate of 20th century movie stars. After decades spent rusting, and facing the scrap heap, its minders settled on a deal to turn the vessel into what's expected to be the world's largest artificial reef off the coast of Okaloosa County, Fla.: https://www.npr.org/2026/11/11/nx-s1-6030853/ss-united-states-artificial-reef-sinking

45. **Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Endangered Status for the Crater Lake Newt:** On Nov 19 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the Crater Lake newt as endangered, after a petition and lawsuit from the Center for Biological Diversity. The newts live only in Oregon's Crater Lake, where non-native crayfish and warming temperatures have pushed them to the edge of extinction. Snorkel surveys by park scientists found zero wild newts this year, after four in 2025 and 35 in 2023. The Service has one year to finalize the protections. Center attorney Chelsea Stewart-Fusek said, "It shouldn't have taken a lawsuit for Crater Lake newts to get the lifesaving protections they so desperately need." Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 19, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/crater-lake-newt-proposed-for-endangered-species-act-protections-2026-11-19/

46. **Federal Judge Orders a Decision on Endangered Species Protection for the California Spotted Owl:** On Nov 3 a federal judge in San Francisco ordered the Trump administration to finalize Endangered Species Act protections for the California spotted owl by April 30. The owl was proposed for protection in 2023, and the one-year deadline is now

more than two years overdue. The proposal calls for endangered status in central and southern coastal California and threatened status in the Sierra Nevada. The owls depend on mature and old-growth forests threatened by logging, climate change and invasive barred owls. Noah Greenwald of the Center for Biological Diversity said, "I'm so relieved California spotted owls will finally get the protection they need." Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 3, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/court-orders-endangered-species-decision-for-california-spotted-owl-2026-11-03/

47. **Colorado Voters Approve Proposition 137 to Fund Conservation and Wildfire Mitigation:** Colorado's Proposition 137 passed with nearly 52% support, a margin of about 83,400 votes in unofficial results. The measure redirects excess sporting goods and outdoor gear sales tax revenue, which would otherwise go to TABOR refunds, to conservation projects including wildfire mitigation. It is expected to generate about $175 million a year, according to the Aspen Times. The same ballot rejected Amendment 82, the constitutional right to buy and sell natural gas, which was losing by about 186,500 votes. Aspen Times, Nov 2026 (unofficial results): https://aspentimes.com/news/colorado-ballot-measures-midterm-election/

THE URGENT PRESSING ISSUES

What Demands Immediate Attention

1. **October 2026 Is the Warmest October on Record:** The Copernicus Climate Change Service reports October 2026 had a global average surface air temperature of 15.35°C, 0.90°C above the 1991 to 2020 average and 1.75°C above the pre-industrial average. It was the third consecutive month above 1.5°C. Copernicus projects 2026 at 1.56°C to 1.61°C above pre-industrial levels, virtually certain to exceed 1.5°C, and about 80% likely to be the second-warmest year on record. Copernicus Climate Change Service, Nov 6, 2026: https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-warmest-october-record-2026-virtually-certain-exceed-15degc

2. **WMO Update: Earth's Energy Imbalance Hits Its Highest Level on Record:** A World Meteorological Organization update says January to

September 2026 averaged about 1.47°C above the pre-industrial average. Earth's energy imbalance reached its highest level since monitoring began. Carbon dioxide reached 426.8 ppm in 2025, 53% above 1750 levels. The oceans, which absorb about 90% of excess heat, are on track for a tenth straight year of record heat. Glaciers lost more than 400 gigatons of mass, the fourth consecutive year all 19 glacierized regions lost mass. Yale Environment 360, Nov 10, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/wmo-climate-report-2026

3. **Strongest El Nino in Living Memory Set to Surge Carbon Dioxide:** A report from the World Meteorological Organization warns the current El Nino, expected to be the strongest in living memory, sets the stage for another surge in carbon dioxide levels. During El Nino, natural systems absorb less carbon dioxide and add emissions through drier soils, wildfires and degraded wetlands and tundra. About half of human-emitted carbon dioxide is normally absorbed by natural systems each year. Yale Environment 360, Oct 28, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/el-nino-emissions

4. **Snowstorms Drop Microplastics on the Remote Sierra Nevada:** In remote parts of the Sierra Nevada, snowfall delivered as many as 3,200 plastic particles per square meter per day, according to a study in Environmental Science & Technology reported by Yale Environment 360. Polyethylene, polypropylene and polyester were the most common types. About a third of California's fresh water comes from the Sierra Nevada snowpack. The study did not measure how much plastic reaches drinking water. Yale Environment 360, Nov 2, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/sierra-nevada-snowfall-microplastics

5. **Investigation: Chemical Industry Knew for Decades That Microplastics Can Enter Human Bodies:** A Los Angeles Times investigation found the chemical industry has known for decades that ingested microplastic particles can reach vital organs. At a 1974 scientific meeting, German scientist Gerhard Volkheimer showed ingested PVC particles reached the liver, brain, lungs and other tissues of animals within two hours, and a 1975 Union Carbide memo called the study a "horror story." The American Chemistry Council disputes the characterization. Yale Environment 360, Oct 27, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/chemical-industry-microplastics

6. **Survey Finds Zero Wild Newts in Oregon's Crater Lake:** A summer 2026 snorkel survey by Crater Lake National Park scientists found no Crater Lake newts, after four were detected in 2025 and 35 in 2023. Fish introduced in the late 1800s and signal crayfish added in 1915 prey on the newts, and warmer water linked to climate change let crayfish numbers surge, according to the Center for Biological Diversity, which obtained the results through a public records request. The Fish and Wildlife Service has until November 20 to decide whether to protect the newt. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 10, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/survey-finds-zero-wild-newts-in-oregons-crater-lake-2026-11-10/

7. **As Japan's Countryside Empties, Wildlife Disappears:** A 2025 study found biodiversity in Japan stayed stable only where the human population was also stable. Where populations declined, researchers recorded falling abundance of butterflies, fireflies, frogs, birds and native plants, according to Yale Environment 360. Rice fish and heike fireflies depended on rice paddies. The article says rural depopulation in Japan mirrors declines in other countries, including Spain and China. Yale Environment 360, Nov 6, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/japan-depopulation-biodiversity

8. **Study: Fossil Fuel Warming May Have Halted a New Ice Age:** Researchers report evidence that warming from burning fossil fuels reversed the advance of a new ice age. The Barnes ice cap on Baffin Island, the last remnant of the Laurentide ice sheet, began expanding about 2,000 years ago, and by the 1960s summers were warm enough that it started shrinking again, according to a study in Science led by Columbia University geochemist Nicolas Young. Yale Environment 360, Oct 30, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/ice-age-avoided

9. **Microplastics Found in the Blood of 27 of 28 Notable North Americans Tested:** The Plastic Pollution Coalition and partners, including the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, released a report on October 27 that found microplastics in the blood of 27 of 28 people, about 96%, all notable figures in music, art, media, politics or public policy in Canada and the U.S. Samples were analyzed in two labs, at the University of New Mexico and the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and eight polymers were identified. On average over 90% of detected particles were smaller than 500 nanometers. The page says the health

impact is still under investigation. Plastic Pollution Coalition, Oct 27, 2026: https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/blog/2026/10/27/microplastics-in-me-report

10. **North Carolina Regulators Say Chemours Cleanup Plan Violates Consent Order:** North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality sent Chemours a 36-page critique arguing its groundwater and soil cleanup proposal violates a 2019 consent order, citing missing data, substandard sampling and flawed analyses. PFAS contamination from the Fayetteville Works plant spans at least 10 counties and has been found in private wells as far as 25 miles away. Chemours has 60 days to respond. No cleanup timeline exists, and the work could take decades, according to Inside Climate News. Inside Climate News, Nov 11, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11112026/north-carolina-chemours-pfas-pollution-accountability/

11. **Study: More Than a Quarter of Cactus Species Could Lose Most of Their Habitat:** More than a quarter of nearly 1,000 cactus species analyzed could lose over 80% of their suitable habitat by the end of the century, according to a study published November 11 in Nature. Including severe drought produced far larger projected losses than temperature and average rainfall alone. Hotspots in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador and Central America are expected to be hit hardest. Over 30% of cactus species are already considered threatened, mainly from habitat loss and illegal trade. Inside Climate News, Nov 11, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11112026/cactus-heat-drought-global-warming/

12. **Seven-Year Study Finds Threatened Species Declining in Cambodia's Largest Mangroves:** Camera traps at 156 sites in the Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary and the adjacent Koh Kapik Ramsar site, Cambodia's largest mangrove expanse, showed four threatened species declined between 2017 and 2023: long-tailed macaques, large-spotted civets, fishing cats and smooth-coated otters. Only the adaptable common palm civet increased. Sunda pangolins and hairy-nosed otters were difficult to detect. The researchers are from Fishing Cat Ecological Enterprise, according to Mongabay. Mongabay, Nov 11, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/11/cambodias-mangrove-forests-offer-vital-refuge-for-threatened-wildlife-7-year-study-finds

13. **Report Links Canadian Extractive Firms to the Displacement of 300,000 People in Africa:** A 193-page report from the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project at York University links Canadian extractive industries to the displacement of at least 300,000 people in Africa over 30 years. The report reviews Canadian government responses to allegations against 23 firms since 1996, according to Mongabay. The article names Tanzania, Mauritania, Ghana and Ethiopia among the places involved. Mongabay, Nov 12, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/11/canadian-extractive-firms-displaced-300000-in-africa-since-1996-report-says/

14. **Study: South Korea Could Become a Zero-Catch State for Pacific Flying Squid by the 2040s:** South Korea's squid catch is now one-sixteenth of its 2002 volume, according to the national statistics service, and sea surface temperatures around the Korean Peninsula rose 0.7°C over the past decade, more than twice the global average. A study by Pukyong National University researchers in Communications Earth & Environment found zero-catch scenarios could arrive between 2043 and 2048, depending on emissions. Experts say the squid is shifting north toward the Arctic rather than going extinct. The price of a medium fresh squid rose more than 40% between 2022 and 2026, according to the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation as reported by Mongabay. Mongabay, Nov 9, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/south-koreas-beloved-squid-may-vanish-from-its-waters-due-to-climate-change-heat-waves/

15. **Review: Drought Is Redefining How Aquatic Diseases Spread:** A review in Trends in Ecology & Evolution by Pieter Johnson of the University of Colorado Boulder and Tara Stewart Merrill of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies examined 100 earlier studies. It found disease risk peaks where water is limited but not gone, as animals and pathogens crowd into shrinking water. Drought affected about 30% of the globe's land surface in 2025, nearly double the area in 2000. Reintroducing river prawns in Senegal cut infected snail abundance by 80%, a sign that ecological tools can reduce transmission, according to Mongabay. Mongabay, Nov 6, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/2026/11/drought-driven-by-climate-change-is-redefining-how-disease-spreads-study-finds/

16. **Floods Kill at Least 12 in Ecuador as Storms Hit Southern Brazil:** Media reports citing Ecuador's risk management agency put the toll at 12

deaths as of November 5, with 56,323 people affected, 12,793 houses damaged and 38 destroyed, and 30 rivers and streams overflowing across five coastal provinces. In Santa Catarina, Brazil, storms on November 4 and 5 caused 671 incidents in 76 municipalities, killed one person in Rio Negrinho and led to more than 110 rescues in Lages and Rio do Sul. Brazil also recognized emergencies in 44 municipalities across 13 states on November 3, 12 of them for drought, according to the Pan American Health Organization's hazards monitoring report. Pan American Health Organization, Nov 5, 2026: https://www.paho.org/en/natural-hazards-monitoring/natural-hazards-monitoring-5-november-2026

17. **Study: Polystyrene Nanoplastics Speed Colon Tumor Growth in Mice as Early-Onset Colon Cancer Rises:** Researchers at Central South University in China found that long-term exposure to polystyrene nanoplastics, the plastic in Styrofoam cups and take-out containers, promoted tumor growth in mice predisposed to colon cancer. The nanoplastics built up in the colon, disrupted the cells lining the gut and upset the balance of gut bacteria, and the exposed mice had more tumors and more severe tumors than unexposed mice. Colorectal cancer rates rose 3% a year among U.S. adults ages 20 to 49 between 2013 and 2022, according to The Washington Post. A study published last year found more microplastics concentrated in colorectal tumors than in healthy nearby tissue. Lorne Hofseth of the University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy says, "My intuition says it's a major factor." The study was in mice, and Frank Frizelle of the University of Otago, who was not involved, suggested microplastics may act mainly by getting through the mucus layer, according to Yale Environment 360. The Washington Post, Nov 15, 2026: https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2026/11/15/new-evidence-links-microplastics-colon-cancer/; Yale Environment 360, Nov 16, 2026: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/microplastics-colon-cancer

18. **Florida Floods Twice in Three Weeks: 24 Inches in Brevard County, Then a Record St. Johns River:** A stalled storm dropped up to 24.10 inches of rain near Malabar in southern Brevard County on Nov 1 and 2. The National Weather Service in Melbourne issued a Flash Flood Emergency for Palm Bay and West Melbourne, and Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency. Two people died in Palm Bay, and a roadway collapse in Palm Bay Estates cut off dozens of residents. The meteorologist Matt Devitt estimated about 3 trillion gallons fell across Florida in 48 hours, according to WLRN. On Nov 19 a second storm

dropped 8 to 15 inches on parts of Broward County, and the St. Johns River near Cocoa reached 18.0 feet, passing its 1953 record of 17.55 feet. NWS Melbourne said, "This passes the flood of record." Broward County, Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood declared states of emergency, and DeSantis expanded his order to cover Atlantic coast counties, according to Nature World News. Watchers, Nov 3, 2026: https://watchers.news/2026/11/03/florida-declares-emergency-after-catastrophic-flooding-in-southern-brevard-county/; WLRN, Nov 12, 2026: https://www.wlrn.org/2026-11-12/historic-flooding-leaves-parts-of-eastern-florida-in-disarray; Nature World News, Nov 19, 2026: https://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/73940/20261119/stalled-storm-pushes-st-johns-river-past-its-1953-record-level-3-flood-threat-shifts-floridas.htm

19. **Billion-Dollar U.S. Wildfires Are Five Times More Frequent and Cost 10 Times More:** Climate Central found that billion-dollar wildfires rose from 5 in 1987 to 2006 to 26 in 2007 to 2026, and their total cost climbed from about $15.6 billion to about $170 billion in 2026 dollars. Since 1980 the 31 billion-dollar wildfires through September 2026 total about $186 billion, with an estimated 373 deaths and more than 79,500 structures destroyed. The report ties the rise to more frequent and intense hot, dry and windy conditions and to more homes and businesses in fire-prone areas, according to Climate Central. Climate Central, Nov 11, 2026: https://www.climatecentral.org/climate-matters/billion-dollar-us-wildfires

20. **Gray Whale Deaths Climb as Groups Sue Over a Missed Federal Deadline:** On Nov 17 three conservation groups sued the National Marine Fisheries Service in the Northern District of California over protections for the Eastern North Pacific gray whale. The agency missed its Nov 22, 2025 deadline for an initial finding on a 2025 petition for Endangered Species Act protection. The population has declined by as much as 50% in the past decade. At least 192 gray whales have stranded and died along the West Coast in 2026, and only 85 calves were counted in 2025, the lowest number in 30 years. Miyoko Sakashita of the Center for Biological Diversity called the number of deaths "staggering." Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 17, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-challenges-trump-administration-delay-in-protecting-imperiled-gray-whales-2026-11-17/

21. **Microplastics Found in Nearly Two-Thirds of Corals in a Malaysian Marine Park:** A Universiti Malaysia Terengganu study found microplastics

in 64% of 200 coral fragments collected from five sites around Pulau Redang, a marine park protected since 1985. The study, in the journal Regional Studies in Marine Science, counted 285 particles. The highest concentration was at Long Beach. According to Malaysia's Fisheries Department, Pulau Redang had near-total bleaching and local coral mortality of 63.6% during the global bleaching event, and plastic contact raises the risk of coral disease. The Star (Malaysia), Oct 2, 2026: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2026/10/02/plastics-also-found-in-marine-park-coral-reefs; The Star (Malaysia), Oct 2, 2026: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2026/10/02/heat-and-microplastics-land-a-double-blow

22. **Study: Rising Seas Could Flood Parts of the Habitat of Up to 45% of Land Vertebrates:** A team from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou assessed the effect of future sea-level rise on 34,120 species of land vertebrates worldwide. Between 14,325 and 15,324 species could see parts of their habitats inundated by the end of the century, up to 45% of the species surveyed. More than 96% of the refuges the researchers identified lie outside existing protected areas, according to China Daily. China Daily Hong Kong, Oct 13, 2026: https://www.chinadailyhk.com/article/641005

ENVIRONMENTAL SETBACKS AND DISASTERS

Beyond Urgent Issues

1. **Supreme Court Clears Way for Border Wall Construction Across Big Bend:** The U.S. Supreme Court lifted a federal judge's October 2 injunction that had halted border barrier and road construction in the Big Bend region for about a month, according to the Center for Biological Diversity. The order is temporary and does not decide whether the environmental-law waivers are legal. Construction can resume in Big Bend National Park and could begin in Big Bend Ranch State Park, along more than 500 miles of the Rio Grande. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 9, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/supreme-court-clears-way-for-border-wall-construction-across-big-bend-2026-11-09/

2. **Trump Administration Proposes Commercial Fishing in a Pacific Marine Monument:** On November 9 the Trump administration proposed a rule that would open the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument to commercial fishing, allowing purse seine and longline fishing, the same methods allowed outside the monument, according to the Center for Biological Diversity. The proposed rule has a 30-day comment period. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 9, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/trump-administration-reignites-commercial-fishing-proposal-for-pacific-marine-monument-2026-11-09/

3. **Groups Move to Sue Over Overdue Manatee Critical Habitat:** The Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of their intent to sue over its failure to finalize critical habitat for Florida and Antillean manatees. The final designation is overdue by more than a year. The Florida manatee's critical habitat has not been updated since 1976, and manatees have suffered six unusual mortality events in the last 20 years, according to the groups. The Service's 2024 proposal would add nearly 1 million acres in Florida and almost 80,000 acres in Puerto Rico. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 9, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-launched-to-compel-critical-habitat-for-florida-antillean-manatees-2026-11-09/

4. **Complaints Target JBS and Barclays Over Profits Linked to Illegal Deforestation:** A coalition of legal and environmental groups filed 14 complaints with prosecutors and financial regulators in the U.K., Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands against JBS and 12 financial institutions, investors and advisers, including Barclays. The groups argue profits from cattle raised on illegally cleared Amazon land are proceeds of crime under anti-money laundering laws. They cite an AidEnvironment report linking JBS suppliers to more than 6.5 million hectares of Amazon deforestation from 1988 to 2026. JBS disputes the allegations, and Barclays declined to comment. Mongabay, Nov 5, 2026: https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/11/money-laundering-complaints-target-jbs-barclays-over-profits-linked-to-illegal-deforestation/

5. **COP17 Finds the World Behind on 22 of 23 Nature Targets and Leaves Funding Unresolved:** COP17 ended October 31 in Yerevan with the first global review of progress toward the 2030 nature goals, which

found the world behind on 22 of 23 targets, according to Carbon Brief. Developed countries missed their goal of at least $20 billion a year for nature by 2025, and the Cali Fund for companies using genetic data held little more than $10,000, according to Climate Home News. Delegates invited developing countries to signal interest in becoming donors, and the form of a permanent post-2030 finance mechanism was postponed to COP18 in Quito, Ecuador, in 2028. Carbon Brief, Oct 31, 2026: tthttps://www.carbonbrief.org/cop17-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-biodiversity-conference-in-yerevan; Climate Home News, Oct 31, 2026: https://climatechangenews.com/2026/10/31/cop17-delivers-fragile-deal-scaling-up-biodiversity-conservation-armenia-cbd

6. **COP31 Opens in Antalya With Finance Fights, Dropped Adaptation Proposals and No US Officials:** COP31 opened November 9 in Antalya, Turkey, with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres telling leaders to "get serious" and warning "We have entered a new age of climate extremes," according to Khaleej Times. Developing nations pushed to put climate finance on the agenda, and an EU official warned of little political will for new funding pledges. The U.S. has sent no officials, though a congressional delegation is attending. COP31 adopted a standalone Climate Finance Work Programme, but proposals on tripling adaptation finance and on climate-related trade measures were dropped, according to Down To Earth. The U.N. Environment Programme's Adaptation Gap Report 2026 puts international public adaptation finance at $28.2 billion to $31.7 billion in 2024, against estimated needs of $305 billion a year by 2035. At the end of the first week, more than 100 agenda items and about 60 significant mandates remained open, according to negotiations president Chris Bowen, and investment announcements at the summit are voluntary and do not automatically become formal decisions, according to Daily Sabah. By November 17, no decisions had been adopted and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin reported little progress, with the cover decision, adaptation indicators and fossil fuel transition language still open. Khaleej Times, Nov 9, 2026: https://www.khaleejtimes.com/world/cop31-opens-leaders-pressure-tackle-climate-crisis; Down To Earth, Nov 10, 2026: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/cop31-adopts-climate-finance-work-programme-proposals-for-adaptation-funding-trade-measures-dropped; Daily Sabah, Nov 16, 2026: https://www.dailysabah.com/turkiye/cop31s-first-week-ends-here-is-what-you-need-to-know/news; Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Nov 18, 2026: https://enb.iisd.org/sites/default/files/2026-11/enb12909e.pdf

7. **Greenpeace to Appeal After Court Denies New Trial in Energy Transfer Lawsuit:** North Dakota's District Court denied Greenpeace's motion for a new trial in Energy Transfer's lawsuit over Dakota Access Pipeline protests, and Greenpeace says it will appeal to the North Dakota Supreme Court. A jury awarded Energy Transfer more than $660 million in 2025, the judge reduced it to $345 million, and the judgment was finalized February 27, 2026. Greenpeace calls the case a strategic lawsuit against public participation and says the trial was flawed. Those are the group's claims, not court findings. Greenpeace, Nov 2, 2026: https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/greenpeace-to-appeal-after-north-dakota-court-denies-new-trial-request-failing-to-rectify-error-filled-trial-in-energy-transfer-slapp-lawsuit/

8. **Senate Passes Sweeping Permitting Bill 62-33; Environmental Groups Urge the House to Vote No:** The Senate passed the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act 62-33 on November 19. Two Republicans, Mike Rounds and Josh Hawley, and 31 Democrats voted no, according to Nature World News. Earlier votes were 73-25 on November 9 to advance the bill and 70-27 on November 16 to end debate, according to Inside Climate News and HNGN. The bill would speed federal permitting for data centers, clean energy and fossil fuel projects, especially high-voltage transmission lines. Challenges to federal environmental reviews would generally have 150 days to file, challengers would need to show direct and immediate harm, and a project approval would generally stay in effect while an agency fixes a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act. The bill also changes Endangered Species Act consultations, limits state review of certain water-quality impacts under the Clean Water Act and changes consultation on ancestral lands and sacred sites. Attorneys general from 15 states and the District of Columbia warned in a November 9 letter that it would weaken state and tribal authority over water, historic and cultural resources. The Sierra Club opposes the bill, though some climate groups and Democrats support permitting reform. Beyond Plastics says the bill was negotiated behind closed doors by four senators and industry lobbyists, and that a House vote could come soon after Thanksgiving. Speaker Mike Johnson plans to bring the bill up under suspension the week after Thanksgiving, which needs a two-thirds majority of members present. If that fails, it goes to the Rules Committee, according to Heatmap News. Current federal funding expires Dec 11, a possible vehicle for the bill. President Trump praised the bill but said he

will not approve wind turbines, according to Inside Climate News. The Senate used H.R. 2347, a bill the House passed by voice vote on Apr. 27, as the vehicle for the substitute text, according to the More Than Just Parks bill tracker. Nature World News, Nov 20, 2026: https://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/73974/20261120/us-senate-passes-permitting-overhaul-that-would-limit-environmental-lawsuits-change-endangered.htm; Inside Climate News, Nov 10, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/10112026/senate-advances-permitting-bill/; HNGN, Nov 16, 2026: https://hngn.com/articles/273848/20261116/senate-advances-permitting-bill-70-27-jeffries-opposes-it.htm; California Attorney General, Nov 9, 2026: https://oag.ca.gov/node/632618; Beyond Plastics (Action Network): https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-your-congressperson-vote-no-on-baaja; More Than Just Parks bill tracker, Nov 17, 2026: https://morethanjustparks.com/bill-tracker/baaja; Heatmap News, Nov 20, 2026: https://heatmap.news/politics/baaja-house

9. **Interior Department Plan Would Shrink the Federal Estate Through Land Sales and Transfers:** The Department of the Interior's strategic plan for fiscal years 2026 to 2030 says the department "will work to decrease the size of the federal estate" and would let it transfer public lands to state, local and tribal governments through sales or land swaps. The plan lets the Bureau of Land Management sell or transfer properties, including those leased for oil, gas and minerals. Kate Groetzinger of the Center for Western Priorities called it "the biggest attack we've ever seen on public lands." The article gives no acreage for planned sales, and the Bureau of Land Management needs congressional approval to sell parcels larger than 2,500 acres, according to Inside Climate News. Inside Climate News, Nov 13, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13112026/federal-government-could-sell-off-untold-acres-of-public-lands/

10. **Groups Say Federal Delay Endangers the Birmingham Darter Near a Massive Alabama Data Center:** The Alabama Rivers Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity and Black Warrior Riverkeeper sent a 60-day notice of intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior over inaction on their petition, nearly a year old, to list the Birmingham darter under the Endangered Species Act. The two-inch fish has six known populations, all in Jefferson County, Alabama, and one lies upstream of Project Marvel, a 4.5-million-square-foot, 1,200-megawatt data center in Bessemer. QTS bought the project for $432 million in June, according to local media reports, and clearing of the site is ongoing,

according to Inside Climate News. Inside Climate News, Nov 13, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13112026/trump-administration-stalling-protections-for-imperiled-fish-near-massive-alabama-data-center-groups-say/

11. **Report: Banks Provided $219.4 Billion to Top Plastic Polluters While Safeguards Stay Missing:** Break Free From Plastic, with FairFin and Facing Finance, released "Cashing In On Plastic," a report on which financial institutions finance the top plastic polluters across Europe, the U.S. and Asia. The report finds $219.4 billion in loans and underwriting from January 2019 to May 2025 for makers of single-use packaging, and $138.0 billion in shareholdings held or managed in consumer goods companies as of May 31, 2025. Named companies include Unilever, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and Nestle. The report says sustainability claims and lending practices do not match the severity of the plastic pollution crisis, and that lending agreements lack safeguards. It urges banks and investors to pull money from companies expanding virgin plastic production, refuse to finance single-use plastics, require companies to disclose plastic footprints and set reduction targets, and tie lending terms to measurable progress. Break Free From Plastic, Nov 10, 2026: https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/plastic-private-finance/

12. **Greenpeace Unveils an Attenborough Boulder to Protest Bottom Trawling in a UK Protected Area:** Greenpeace unveiled a limestone boulder carved to look like Sir David Attenborough and plans to lower it into the sea to halt trawling in the Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation, reportedly the UK's most bottom-trawled marine protected area. The UK's Marine Management Organisation has threatened legal action if the boulder is dropped. Will McCallum, co-executive director of Greenpeace UK, said, "The government should stop threatening peaceful protestors and start protecting our seas," according to Positive News. Positive News, Nov 13, 2026: https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-46-of-2026/

13. **Army Detonates Nearly 5 Tons of Lead Azide in Iowa; Soil Results Still Pending:** The Army detonated 68 barrels, about 9,500 pounds, of degraded lead azide at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Middletown on Wed, Nov 25, shortly after 9 a.m. The blast had been set for Nov 20 and was delayed five days while a court weighed a challenge by Earthjustice for the Iowa Environmental Council and the Sierra Club Iowa Chapter. The

8th Circuit paused the EPA permit on Nov 19, and the Justice Department said the Army would proceed under an emergency exclusion, citing an "immediate risk" of spontaneous explosion. Army officials said initial air monitoring detected no airborne lead, and Maj. Gen. Eric Shirley said the Army cut the risk "as close to zero as is absolutely humanly possible." The Army used 3,600 gallons of foam it describes as PFAS-free, plus a water wall of more than 100,000 gallons. According to Inside Climate News, soil results are still pending and children's blood lead levels will be monitored. Lead exposure expert Bruce Lanphear said the failure to detect airborne lead "does not establish that no lead was released or that no one was exposed." Michael Schmidt of the Iowa Environmental Council said earlier, "The EPA itself admits that there is no safe level of lead exposure for humans," according to Earthjustice. Inside Climate News, Nov 25, 2026: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/25112026/iowa-lead-explosives-health-risks-close-to-zero/; CBS News, Nov 25, 2026: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iowa-army-ammunition-plant-unstable-explosives-detonation/; ABC News, Nov 22, 2026: https://abcnews.com/US/army-moves-detonation-10000-pounds-lead-azide-wedneday/story?id=138330909; Earthjustice, Nov 19, 2026: https://earthjustice.org/?p=58175; The Intercept, Nov 19, 2026: https://theintercept.com/2026/11/19/iowa-lead-ammunition-detonation-army/

14. **Groups Sue Over a Third Gulf Oil Lease Sale Held Without Environmental Review:** On Nov 17 Gulf and environmental groups sued the Trump administration over the third Gulf oil and gas lease sale, "Big Beautiful Gulf 3," which the Interior Department held on Aug 12. The sale offered more than 81.2 million acres of public waters. It is the third of 30 Gulf lease sales required through 2040 under the 2025 Reconciliation Act. The groups say the sale skipped review under the National Environmental Policy Act and other core environmental laws, and they already challenge two earlier sales from December 2025 and March 2026. NRDC's Julia Forgie said, "An agency can't erase the risks of the sale to Rice's whale." Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 17, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-challenges-third-gulf-oil-lease-sale-held-without-environmental-review-2026-11-17/

15. **Lawsuit Challenges New Mexico's Water Approval for the Project Jupiter Data Center:** On Nov 19 the Center for Biological Diversity sued the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer in Santa Fe County District Court. The office approved "hundreds of millions of gallons" of water to

build Project Jupiter, a hyperscale data center in Doña Ana County. The group says the engineer skipped required public notice, protest opportunities and a public-interest hearing. It also says the engineer used an emergency provision that denied due process while diverting irrigation water to the site. The suit asks for a pause in water use at the construction site until all legal requirements are met. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 19, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-challenges-new-mexicos-ok-of-water-for-project-jupiter-construction-2026-11-19/

16. **Center Moves to Sue Over Glen Canyon Dam Operations That Threaten Grand Canyon Fish:** On Nov 19 the Center for Biological Diversity filed a notice of intent to sue the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over Glen Canyon Dam operations. The threatened humpback chub and razorback sucker face added risk because very low Lake Powell levels and warmer water make it easier for non-native fish to pass through the dam. The group says Reclamation has not carried out a 2016 directive to prevent that passage and abandoned cool-mix flows this summer. The Center wants enforceable, mandatory prevention measures. Center for Biological Diversity, Nov 19, 2026: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-launched-to-protect-threatened-fish-in-grand-canyon-2026-11-19/

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