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CLEAN, FREE,
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FUTURE OF THE
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EDUCATION
QUALITY LEADING
TO INCREASED
ENROLMENT,
REDUCED
ABSENTEEISM

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COLLABORATES
WITH TOILET: EK
PREM KATHA TO
SPREAD THE
MESSAGE OF
SWACHH BHARAT
MISSION

COMPANIES MUST JOIN CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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250 years of Survey of India and CSR to promote it



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
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Foundation for the scientific survey and mapping of the country was laid with 'The Great Trigonometric Survey (GTS)' in 19th century, by noted surveyors Col. Lambton and Sir George Everest.

Survey of India, the principal mapping agency of the country is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year. It is the oldest scientific department in India and one of the oldest survey establishments in the world. The origin of the Survey of India is traced back to year 1767, when Major James Rennell was appointed as the Surveyor General of Bengal.

Foundation for the scientific survey and mapping of the country was laid with 'The Great Trigonometric Survey (GTS)' in 19th century, by noted surveyors Col. Lambton and Sir George Everest. These maps have played an invaluable role in the saga of India's nation building and were pivotal in the foundation of almost all major developmental activities of the modern India.

Survey of India has played an indispensable pioneering role in understanding the country's priorities in growth and defense.

In order to mark this once-in-a-lifetime event, Survey of India is organizing year-long series of events to showcase the invaluable contributions made by great predecessors and to look forward to a new era of geospatial evolution which would facilitate India to achieve future economic milestones along with Sustainable Development Goals. It is here that, CSR funds needs to come in.

Further this would also offer an occasion to celebrate and recognize the larger value of great institutional history of Survey of India and demonstrate its capabilities, achievements and contribu-

tions in nation building. It would also be a very fitting gratitude to thousands and lakhs of Surveyors who have contributed against all odds with the determination and missionary zeal to map the country and provide topographical unity to India. This event also provides a good opportunity to showcase the historical value of Survey of India to common people and also demonstrate its immense potential in simplest form to stakeholder's entities prevailing in public, private and civil society's domain.

The historic journey of Survey of India dates back to eighteenth century. It is a story of great adventure and high devotion to the cause of exploration under extremely trying conditions, requiring not only a high order of professional competence but many of those qualities of the head and heart which enable successful completion of difficult task.

Fore-runners of army of the East India Company and Surveyors had an onerous task of exploring the unknown. Bit by bit the tapestry of Indian terrain was completed by the painstaking efforts of a distinguished line of Surveyors such as Mr. Lambton and Sir George Everest.

Looking back at the magnitude of the task accomplished, the courage and foresight of these pioneer Surveyors is admirable. It will be quite an ideal and appropriate platform for Survey of India to showcase its technical strength and achievements of the past 250 years, starting from Great Trigonometric Survey of 1802 to computation of height of Mount Everest in 1849 and many more.

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The Tata Group To Be Title Sponsor Of Asia's Most Prestigious Marathon For 10 Years

The Tata group, a global enterprise with over 100 independent operating companies, announced that it will be the title sponsor of one of the world's top 10 marathons – the Mumbai Marathon. From 2018, India's most prestigious long distance race will be called the 'Tata Mumbai Marathon' with its 15th edition scheduled on 21st January next year.

The Tata Mumbai Marathon will be jointly sponsored by the Tata group and Tata Consultancy Services, one of the world's leading IT, business solutions and consulting organisations, for a period of ten years, beginning 2018, which marks the 150th anniversary year of the Tata group and the 50th anniversary year of Tata Consultancy Services.



The Tata group has served as an instrumental force in propelling Indian sports and has shown immense dedication to helping grow and develop the sporting fabric of India. The group has forged a strong bond with society through the various academies that they run at the grassroots level, the sporting legends they support, and their associations across a multitude of sporting disciplines including marathons, the epitome of participative sports.

Speaking on the occasion, N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons, said, "We are delighted to become the title sponsor of the Tata Mumbai Marathon from 2018. Events like the marathon promote values like grit, tenacity, excellence, perseverance, belief, commitment, and passion that have been a key part of the Tata group's ethos since its inception, almost 150 years ago.

Chandrasekaran added: "Partnering with India's premier long-distance running event is a great way for the Tata group to increase our engagement with the community, raise funds for charity as well as create societal awareness about the necessity of good health and fitness. As a marathoner, I'm personally proud to support this partnership."



KODAK'S SUPPORT FOR THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAM IN 2017 is part of the company's Print For Good initiative which is focused on promoting literacy around the world. The global program partners with printers and industry stakeholders to target high need areas with book drives, book donations and the printing of school materials and supplies to support literacy efforts on a global basis. For the 2017 Youth for People Notebook Donation program, Kodak worked with its local customer Nemlaxmi Books to print the 5,000 notebooks, using Kodak technology. For those looking to contribute directly to 2017 Notebook Donation Program, visit the following link (www.aerohean.org) and also follow, post and support Youth for People on Facebook or Twitter with the #notebookdonationdrive2017.

Dalai Lama When You Lose, Don't Lose The Lesson

His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a talk on 'The Art of Happiness' at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi on 10 August 2017.

His Holiness said, "Mother's love is important to the growth of child. It has an impact on the child throughout his/her life. From birth till death, love and affection are the key factors that determine a happy life."

"Materialistic life talks more of power and money. It lacks the inner values such as respect for others and compassion. Self-centered attitude leads to competition, which in turn leads to fear, irritation and anger. Then, these destructive emotions turn into violence," His Holiness noted.

His Holiness further talked about the 200 million people killed through violence in the 20th century. "21st century should avoid the violence and bloodshed of the 20th century. This can be done through action with vision. Existing modern education is inadequate to create a happy life as it focuses more on materialistic education rather than inner values," His Holiness observed.

His Holiness mentioned that we must educate people to tackle destructive emotion such as anger. "We must go deeper into the root cause and try to treat from



that. We have to look at the problem from different dimensions with a wider perspective. If we can do that, the intensity of irritation will reduce. Look from holistic view to tackle negative emotion," His Holiness said.

Educationist and scientist have common idea to educate on secular ethics. Today inner value is highly essential. "We must try to demilitarise and bring dialogue to have more peaceful century."

His Holiness further recounted how an 8th century Tibetan emperor invited Shanta Rakshita from India to introduce Nalanda University knowledge into Ti-

bet. "This was the light that illuminated the whole of Tibet," His Holiness noted.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama also gave a speech to Tibetan public before concluding the talk. He urged Tibetans to learn Tibetan language to study that ancient Indian knowledge, which is highly relevant to today's world.

Vipan Chopra, President of Association of British Scholars and Neeraj Gulati, Founder of BM Anand Foundation organised the public talk and function.

Chopra also thanks for the contribution of Rajesh Tiwari Director General CSR & INDIAN Centre for CSR. ■

Corporates Declare Their Support For The Bharat Yatra

The BSE, Paytm, Godrej and L&T declared whole hearted support for the Bharat Yatra announced by Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi.



Launch of bharat yatra website by corporates and KS

BSE hosted the Nobel Peace Laureate at the Stock Exchange and launched the Bharat Yatra website in Mumbai recently.

Paytm will be partnering with the Yatra and the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation in the march to end child sexual abuse and trafficking. Vivek Gambhir, Managing Director at Godrej Consumer

Products Ltd, Srikanth Joshi, CEO & MD, L&T Realty Ltd and actor Vivek Oberoi spoke about the issues of child sexual abuse and trafficking, while urging people to join Satyarthi for the Bharat yatra.

Preparing the grounds for the yatra, Satyarthi has been interacting with several corporate leaders, urging them to organise programmes to sensitise their employees,

discussing the best practices to curb this menace and join him in the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation.

He recently spoke to over 500 LinkedIn employees in Bangalore and received overwhelming support from them for his campaign and the upcoming yatra.

"India's growth story must not be eclipsed by this moral epidemic. The esti-

Atlanta's Model For The Future Of Urban Green Spaces

One major reason for the increase in biodiversity has been the native forest created under the supervision of Trees Atlanta, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting Atlanta's urban canopy. Trees Atlanta has planted 19 acres of indigenous trees and grasses around the abandoned tracks. Ten more acres of reforestation are planned for next year, writes Judith Moen

Brilliant shades of purple, yellow and orange beckon hikers and bikers to maturing meadows in the urban center. Parents stroll children along trails cooled by the fragrant breezes of native magnolia, dogwood, oak and long leaf pine trees. Families picnic near a 40-foot cascading waterfall.

This scene in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, is a far cry from what it was nine years ago. Back then, trucks illegally dumped toxic chemicals, trash and tires here. Kudzu and other weeds flourished, forming ad hoc habitat for rats and copperhead snakes.

Now, the Atlanta BeltLine is wiping out blight with 33 miles of multi-use trails along a historic rail line that encircles the city's core. The ring of infrastructure is boosting environmental awareness in a metropolis that has been better known for suburban sprawl than parklands. Although other cities are turning abandoned tracks into greenways, the \$4.8 billion project connecting 45 neighborhoods offers unique lessons on urban renewal.

Master vision

A master's degree thesis sparked the movement to build the BeltLine. In 1999, Ryan

Gravel, then an architecture student at Georgia Tech, envisioned and fleshed out a plan to build a modern transit system to replace a ring of decaying rail tracks that encircled the capital city.

It took several years of negotiating among politicians, city officials, community advocates, real estate developers, landscape architects and environmentalists to solidify a proposal. Then, in 2006, Atlanta



established the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) to lead a renovation funded by private donors and the city that includes bike trails, parks, water management systems, housing, electric transit, art sculptures and more. According to Gravel, the project is the most extensive of its kind in the United States.

"I wanted to make Atlanta a place I wanted to live in," he said. "Who would have

thought that this idea would take off? It has been fun, excruciating and rewarding."

This network-in-the-making is boosting environmental awareness in a city that used to be better known for its traffic jams and sewage-polluted streams. Efforts to clean up 1,100 acres of contaminated brownfields and plant more than 3,000 indigenous trees and grasses are bringing back biodiversity not seen in decades.

"The native plantings they have done had a tremendous positive impact," said Berry Brosi, associate professor of environmental science at Emory University. "We found enormous areas in terms of pollinator abundance."

In fact, an unpublished study Brosi conducted found on average three times as many bee species and five times as many bees in pollinator planting sites along the BeltLine than in mowed grass.

"I noticed for the first time in my backyard, we are seeing bees, butterflies, even fireflies, which is different than four years ago," said Chad Ralston, who lives nearby and bikes almost daily.

One major reason for the increase in biodiversity has been the native forest created under the supervision of Trees Atlanta,



COMPANIES MUST JOIN CIRCULAR ECONOMY

ENTERING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE. HERE ARE SIX TIPS FOR COMPANIES LOOKING TO PROFIT FROM CLOSING THE LOOP, WRITES HANNAH KOH

Bring up sustainability in a conversation with your average business person, and it's sometimes hard to keep their attention. But at least it's a concept they're familiar with. Mention the circular economy, and you're likely to be met with puzzled frowns.

Yet the idea of the circular economy, one that reuses or restores all natural and man-made materials to eliminate waste and reduce consumption, is more important today than ever, said Malavika Jain Barbawala, Accenture's director and ASEAN lead, strategy and sustainability at an event held at the Singapore Sustainable Academy last week.

Noting that business revenue and the use of natural resources are traditionally linked, she said that the rate at which humanity is gobbling up the planet's natural resources is untenable.

If humanity is to consume within the Earth's limits, we must achieve a four-fold increase in productivity, she said.

But starting the conversation and then taking action on the circular economy requires strategy, preparation and boldness, said experts at the event organised by real estate firm City Developments Limited.

Here are six tips from the experts on how to get the circular economy rolling at your company:

1. Understand the 5 circular business models

There are currently five business models that show how circular economy principles can form the basis of a sustainable business. Jain of Accenture presented the various models, giving local and global examples.

- Recovery and recycling: Local supermar-

ket NTUC FairPrice sells blemished but good fruit at a discount to prevent food waste, while Singapore-based Tes-Amm is a professional electronic waste recycler.

- Circular supply chain: Timberland partnered Singapore tire manufacturer Omni United to re-use worn out tires to make shoes.
- Sharing platforms: Airbnb and online goods marketplace Carousell allow people to make money from resources they no longer use.
- Product life extension: Family owned and operated Hock Siong & Co buy furniture and household items from organisations and individuals, refurbish them, and resell them.
- Product as services: "We think we need a product, but we actually need the service," said Jain. Consumers using music-

How CSR Execs Redefine The Future Of The Workforce

BY ELLEN WEINREB

The workplace is dramatically changing. A growing cadre of activist employees means CSR and sustainability professionals must start thinking of employee engagement as “fulfillment” rather than a tactical roadmap of actions. That means going well beyond laying out an inclusive engagement strategy to making employee health and well-being a core requisite and indicator of success. But what might that look like?

Talent projections

I recently connected with Sally Uren, the vivacious co-founder of the international non-profit Forum for the Future, to discuss a report her team recently put out on the Future of Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace (PDF). They used scenario planning to try to better understand how exactly our workforce might be changing – and project where we might be headed in 20 years from now. This included looking at impactful factors such as technology developments (3D printing) and social changes such as shifts in demographics.

Sally’s team landed at four possible scenarios after its in-depth research. To bring these four possible scenarios to life, it also created personas, or characters, to demonstrate what each could look like. The four scenarios: business monopoly; service transformation; in the national interest; and redefining progress. It found one key trait across all the factors it studied: that stress and anxiety will play out ever more and likely affect the future workplace in a significant way.

These key takeaways are worth reflection:

- Employers and governments must start actively planning for a future of automation and what that could mean for human employment.
- We need to start using technology and big data for increasing well-being.
- We must begin the process of building supportive peer networks and community interaction in earnest.
- Finally, we need to create healthy workplaces and employment structures including rethinking the role of building and virtual structures.

There is no question that we are entering a period of uncertainty. As generations change hands across the global workforce, they bring a nuanced point of view about themselves and their expectations from employers. Employers decode increasingly interrelated issues such as income inequality, climate change and mental health-related concerns. Corporations who traditionally have played reactive ball with employee welfare are having to connect the dots between the sciences of psychology and sociology and the art of purpose.

What is a ‘good life’?

A report launched by Sustainable Brands and Harris Poll, “Enabling the Good Life,” at their annual conference this year also suggested a similar shift between workforce aspirations and business responses. Today’s vision of “the good life” is different from the past, suggested the report, with 71 percent saying living the good life is different for them than it was for their parents – perhaps indicating a greater focus on simplicity, health and people over physical things

Innovation Is The Key To Unlocking Clean Energy

Innovation requires entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs require capital, writes Jon Creyts and Curtis Probst

While current political discourse seems to focus on what divides us, there are many topics on which people from across the political spectrum seem to agree. One of these is the critical importance of innovation. Innovation can create jobs, bolster our economy and improve our lives.

In clean energy, regular innovations arise in electric vehicles, grid technologies, industrial efficiency, renewable energy, building energy efficiency and other applications. Breakthroughs come not only in physical form from research universities or national labs (solar panels or batteries), but also through new commercial applications and business models from the private sector (such as community solar or property assessed clean energy financing – PACE).

Given general agreement on the benefits of innovation, and the particular advantages in clean energy, what then is it that stimulates innovation, and why has the clean energy ecosystem been particularly successful in nurturing it? Until a thorough assessment of this dynamic is complete, we offer a few initial observations from the course of our work at Rocky Mountain Institute.

Focus on research

Whether conducted by business schools or national laboratories, think tanks or universities, research has been core to innovation. Businesses often take discoveries from these institutions and refine them



Innovation requires entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs require capital.

further to achieve broader scale and commercial success. One example of this symbiotic relationship is the internet, where breakthroughs pioneered by government research became building blocks for the

devices, apps and infrastructure developed by businesses.

In 2000, the U.S. ranked fourth in the world in research and development spending as a percentage of GDP (including R&D carried out by all resident companies,

research institutes, university and government laboratories in a country); in 2015, the U.S. ranked 10th. While spending is not the only metric of research activity, we believe that it is often a leading indicator of future innovation. Over the past years, our nation's commitment to R&D in clean energy has helped spur early success. We encourage U.S. policymakers to continue – or

ideally, expand – their support for government-funded research, and enact policies to encourage businesses and academia to further their research activities in clean energy.

A culture that permits prudent risk-taking

Innovation requires entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs require capital. Although innovation is most closely aligned with the venture capital industry, breakthroughs require different types of funding from a wide range

Improvement In Education Quality Leading To Increased Enrolment, Reduced Absenteeism

Bajaj Education Initiative reaches 550+ teachers and 800+ students across 99 schools



Powada singing using BEI given instruments

Education plays the most important role for development of an individual and the society at large. Jankidevi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha (JBGVS) gives top priority to promoting quality education in government and low-cost private schools. Since November 2015, JBGVS with support from Bajaj Auto CSR has been implementing Bajaj Education Initiative (BEI) for such schools in Pimpri-Chinchwad. The objectives are to improve quality of education and provide infrastructure support, which is in line with

government programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and also helps achieve the objectives of Right to Education (RTE) Act.

BEI work set to touch a century

In the past 15 months, under BEI, JBGVS has covered 99 schools in Pimpri-Chinchwad in Pune district through infrastructure development and quality improvement programs, based on a proper selection procedure. Proposals from 25 more schools have been received and are in the shortlisting

process. Infrastructure development over this period includes provision of benches to 4 schools, 42 computer labs, 59 e-learning units (covering state board syllabus of 1st to 10th standard), 62 science labs, library furniture to 22 schools, library books to 5 schools, 8 water purifiers, sports equipment to 40 schools, pre-primary equipment to 39 schools, 46 sound systems, musical instruments to 36 schools and educational kits to 37 schools.

Quality training reaches 550+ teachers, 800+ students

Quality improvement is aimed at students, teachers and parents and covers aspects like teachers' training on subjects like Maths, English and Marathi; pre-primary/aanganwadi teachers' training; orientation on revised syllabus; scholarship exam training; parents' motivational programs; self-defence sessions for girls; school projects exhibitions and educational trips. Teachers' training, orientation and workshops have reached 566 participants; students' programs have reached 844 participants and parents' programs have reached 325 participants. Speaking on the development, P S Mukherjee, Secretary, JBGVS said, "BEI has played a significant role in

Making Women's Work Count

*One of the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals is to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work. How can this goal be translated to action? UNDP gender adviser **Bharati Sadasivam** explains.*



A mother kisses her daughter in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga. Efforts to measure the contribution of care work to national economies have produced estimates ranging from 20 per cent to 60 per cent of GDP. (Image: Asian Development Bank)

Over the next few months, the 12,000 employees based at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California will complete their move to an extravagant new campus. The "spaceship," covering 2.8 mil-

lion square feet, includes a two-story yoga studio, running paths, and even revolutionary pizza boxes that keep slices crisp. One thing it does not have, however, is daycare.

When it comes to ignoring the importance of childcare for working parents, Apple

is far from unique. And that omission places a powerful drag on parents' ability to achieve their economic potential, with women suffering the most. Worldwide, women carry out twice as much unpaid domestic and care work – including raising children, caring for sick or elderly family members, and managing the household – as men do. In Mexico, India, and Turkey, women do three times more care work than men.

This "gender chore gap" limits women's choices, as it impedes their ability to obtain formal education, secure good jobs, and achieve equal pay. Indeed, though women around the world actually work more than men in total (including both paid and unpaid work), they earn one quarter less, on average, hold only one quarter of executive positions in the private sector, and occupy less than one quarter of all seats in national parliaments.

Only half of working-age women worldwide are in the paid labor force, compared to more than three quarters of men.

This situation is slowly beginning to change. Unpaid household and care work is gradually shedding its reputation as "wom-

Get Ready For Climate Impacts Beyond Your Imagination

It's time to start imagining the worst weather scenarios possible, if we are to be prepared for more severe natural disasters in this era of climate change, writes ADB's Renard Teipelke.



A cargo ship swept ashore by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The scale of natural disasters around the world is set to increase thanks to climate change.

Regular patterns seem to define most people's lives. We usually prepare for the future based on what we experienced in the past. But this approach does not work when

dealing with the impact of extreme weather events – which are increasingly less predictable and more severe due to climate change.

I would like to share with you the story of recent disasters in two places that at first

sight could not be more different, but which share an interesting lesson for making cities more resilient against climate change.

Let me first take you to my uncle's hometown of Braunsbach, a small town of 2,500 people in the province of Schwäbisch-Hall in southwest Germany. Most people only know this place because of the nearby Kochertalbrücke, one of the world's tallest viaduct bridges.

Fitting the bucolic image of a stereotypical German small town, Braunsbach is indeed a peaceful, quiet place with a nice town center in the valley, surrounded by houses and green fields on the hillside. One main creek and two smaller creeks run through the town and add to the picture-perfect scenery.

On 29 May 2016, a locally concentrated rain shower hit Braunsbach. In contrast to usual storms, the clouds did not move away but rather remained hanging over a small area near the hills. The downpour released in a single day as much rain as the area usually receives over several months.

The Songs of Trees

Excerpted from *"The Songs of Trees"* by David George Haskell, published 2017 by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright by David George Haskell, 2017.

In 1972 the Landsat satellite, a truck-size marvel of New Astrology, was hurled into orbit. No longer would we peer up at shifting patterns of stars to augur the future. We had a star of our own. In 2013 the eighth Landsat satellite was launched, a continuation of the longest-running space-based study of the Earth's vegetation and terrain. These satellites skate the sky, circling the globe every 100 minutes, recording the scene below with electronic sensors. Like a combine working a wheat field, the path of Landsat's orbit is arranged in offset swaths to cover the entire field, the globe. By projecting trends from the last decades, we see through a satellite's glass, darkly, and squint into the future.

The lidless eye sees both the flush of new growth and fields of stumps. Bare ground outstrips new growth. Summed over the globe, the area of land covered by forests is plunging. The first dozen years of the millennium saw 2.3 million square kilometers of forest lost but only 800,000 regrown. In the boreal region losses outstripped gains by more than two to one, the result of fire and logging. Government statistics obscure these patterns, tallying "forest" wherever young trees might grow, even if no trees are present. Landsat's pictures do not run through the filters of creative accounting. They report a boreal forest in retreat.

Landsat's images have a resolution of 30 meters; they are painted with a fat-tipped brush. But the forest community is a filigree drawn with the finest pen. To understand the satellite, we have to come back to ground. I've returned to the fir tree in summer and, except at night, when the cool air pools and the sound lens returns, the trains and trucks have left the forest.

Instead, the wind directs a chorus of trees. Aspen leaves shudder when the air moves slowly, then spasm into pattering chaos in more forceful gusts. A little calmer, drier, are the white birch leaves that lift from tap to fizz as the wind picks up. These deciduous trees almost smother the rustling, chafing sounds of the fir.

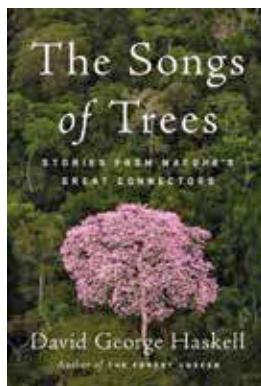
The balsam fir tree holds its stiff needles apart. These living bristles are silent, except in the highest winds. But browned, fallen needles caught in the living foliage rub against the thick, dangling shag of horsehair, antler and rosette lichens that drapes every branchlet in the tree. These combs and tangles grate as twigs bob and the main trunk sways. Dead needles and cone scales drop, tik, into the moss below. Higher wind speeds invigorate the abrasion. The tree hisses like fine steel wool burnishing a tabletop, a sound that is strong, corrosive, but with a soft bite.

The fir's summer song is one of dead matter, moss and lichen, seemingly minor parts of the forest network. Our human senses – and therefore our sense of what is important – are tuned to louder creatures, not to the murmurs of fallen needles and dreadlocks of moss or lichen. We deceive ourselves, though, if we don't occasionally turn from eagles, squirrels and aspen to examine the duff and dross of forests. A study of these recondite members of the community unveils how changing forests connect to global cycles of energy and matter. Landsat's data finds its meaning in the soils and "lower" creatures of the boreal forest.

Soils in boreal forests hold three times as much carbon as all the forests' tree trunks, branches, lichens and other aboveground life combined. Roots, microbes and decaying organic matter are therefore a vast repository of carbon. Depending on the details of accounting methods, boreal soils are either the world's greatest terrestrial carbon store, outweighing even lush tropical forests, or they come a close second.

Worldwide, soils contain three times as much carbon as the atmosphere, so the future of our climate depends on the fate of hissing and rasping fir needles. If the carbon encased in these falling needles should turn skyward instead of lodging in soil, our warming blanket of carbon dioxide would turn to a well-stuffed, overheating quilt.

The enormity of the boreal carbon reserve is partly due to the vastness of the forest itself. One-third of the world's remaining forests grow in the boreal. But even if we ignore their extent, the forests are still disproportionately rich in carbon. When dead needles and mosses lie in cold, water-saturated soils, decomposition is sluggish and a backlog of dead matter soon accumulates. For much of the year, the ground is frozen, paralyzing the microbial activities that turn solid matter into airy carbon dioxide. When summer's meager and short-lived warmth returns, the microbes are again slowed, this time by sodden, acidic conditions. As I stand at the fir, the hundred iridescent-winged mosquitoes that hold me in a cloud of soft, humming wingbeats attest to these swampy conditions.



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