

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 12, 2009

‘350!’ – Get in the Picture to Save the Planet

On Saturday October 24, concerned citizens from Northwest Illinois are invited to gather at Highland Community College in Freeport to be part of a world-wide effort to save the planet. The theme of the gathering, locally co-sponsored by the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and the Highland Environmental Awareness Club, is ‘350!’

The local effort is part of a global movement to devote one day to draw attention to the climate crisis. Organizers claim the Highland gathering will be one of thousands of rallies around the world that have one thing in common: “Support for the most important number on earth: 350!”

A year ago in 2008, NASA’s noted climatologist, James Hansen and his team produced a landmark series of studies. These studies showed that if the amount of carbon in the atmosphere exceeds 350 parts per million, we soon won’t have a planet “similar to the one on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adapted.”

The bad news is we’ve already passed that number. “We’re at 390 parts per million, which is why the Arctic is melting, why drought is spreading across the planet, why people are already dying from things like dengue fever and malaria in places where these diseases have never been seen before.”

The good news is that ‘350!’ gives us a target to aim for. World leaders are meeting in Copenhagen in December of this year to reach agreement on a new climate treaty. ‘350!’ organizers are urging these delegates to pay attention to the latest science and put forward a plan that gets us back to safety.

People in more than 1000 communities around the globe have announced plans to participate on October 24 – which comes just six weeks before crucial UN meetings in Copenhagen. There will be school children planting 350 trees in Bangladesh, scientists hanging banners saying 350 on the statues on Easter Island, 350 scuba divers underwater at the Great Barrier Reef, and many more creative actions like these.

At each event, people will gather for a big group photo that somehow depicts 350. Everyone’s photo will be uploaded to the web at 350.org. As actions take place around the world, all the pictures and videos will be linked together electronically. By the end of the day, there will be a powerful visual petition from around the entire planet.

Individuals and groups from Northwest Illinois are urged to ‘get in the picture!’ Everyone can participate at Highland on Saturday morning October 24 at 10:45 AM.

According to local Audubon members, “It’s a great opportunity to take a stand. It’s a chance to do more than just changing light bulbs. This is our chance to help change the way the whole world operates; to do something about global climate change that will really matter.”

Participants are urged to “Hike, bike or carpool to the Highland campus on Saturday morning. We might as well save some carbon while we’re sending the message,” organizers said.

The group photo will be taken at 10:45 AM near Building H at the north end of the Highland Community College campus. Further information about climate change and global warming, as well as light refreshments, will be available at the gathering. More information about the global ‘350!’ effort is available at 350.org.

Get in the picture! Join us on October 24.

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