



Johnny Ipil-Seed News

The quarterly newsletter of *Trees for the Future (TREES)*

Winter 2006 Vol. XIV, No. 4

Update from India: Partnering for Millions of Trees

India is a land divided into two worlds, where wealth and high-tech industrialization abuts jarring rural poverty. While the stunning diversity in climate, rainfall patterns, and useful local agroforestry species combines to make India one of the most exciting places in which we work, widespread poverty constantly reminds us of how much remains to be done to promote sustainable growth and development, especially for the rural poor.

With the devastating tsunami our work took on an added urgency as communities were in greater need of assistance than ever before. Tamil Nadu province in southern India was hit hardest, and at the time of the disaster we already had a number of established projects in the region. Using our skills in agroforestry and reforestation, we worked



hard to help people and communities regain their livelihoods. Immediately after the tsunami, we formed partnerships with over 20 new organizations looking to help their communities bring life back to degraded, often salinized lands.

New Developments

Earlier this year **Shiva Rea**, a renowned yoga instructor based out of Los Angeles, met with TREES director **Dave Deppner**, and from their conversation came a partnership that is helping us take our work in India to a new level: **The Dance for Life**.

Above: Community tree planting at the base of the mountain in Tiruvanamalai. Left: Reforesting degraded hillsides in arid lands around Tiruvanamalai.



Johnny Ipil-Seed News is a quarterly newsletter of TREES FOR THE FUTURE, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people of the world's poorest communities to begin environmentally beneficial, self-help projects.

This newsletter is printed by wind energy on recycled paper with soy-based ink and is sent to all supporting members to inform them of recent events, plans, financial matters and how their support is helping people.

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Clean Energy: The Trippple Whammmy

For a long time now, we've been telling people that trees are the ultimate source of solar energy, useful even after dark. Many of the trees we help people plant sustainably produce that energy because they coppice (grow back as true trees every time they are cut). In this way, the entire community benefits because there is always a source of energy available, giving people jobs, better nutrition (because they assure enough fuel to cook traditional meals), and a convenient source of energy for local industries that are vital to the economy of these villages.

Firewood is also considered environmentally friendly. The reason is that, although burning wood produces various gases,

these are recovered by new trees, growing to replace those that have been harvested. With that, we point out that almost 60% of the total growth of these trees is in the leaves, which are returned to the soil as organic matter.

The world is now confronted by an energy crisis. Gasoline prices at \$3.00 a gallon is a major inconvenience for most of us but imagine the effect it has on a factory worker in a developing country whose total income is less than \$5.00 per day, and who now must pay an additional \$.50 of that every day to ride the bus to and from work. Small wonder that people in developing countries are moving much faster in developing alternative fuels than we are.

The work being done to develop these fuels caught up with us in 2006. It happened in West Africa where we encourage planting trees as windbreaks to keep

out the desert and now find that one of the trees being planted, called Jatropha, can be a sustainable and excellent source of biofuel if properly managed.

When concerned investors here at home began questioning the ability to sustainably produce ethanol-type fuel from American farms, we pointed out that the ideal feedstock is woody biomass which, to us, also means trees.

Further, using Haiti as an example - because it is in desperate need of tree cover - we explained how the land there, even though greatly devastated,

We import more than 60% of our oil - some 13 million barrels/day at an annual cost of \$300 billion.

Between 1992 and 2005, world production of biodiesel fuels grew from \$10 million to \$1 billion. US production remains less than \$50 million.

would be able to sustainably produce three times as much feedstock per acre as a US farm - giving desperate people jobs and rebuilding

the land at the same time.

As concern about America's dependence on foreign oil, for which we are now paying some \$300 billion per year, continues to grow, people from many sectors are asking TREES about such projects. The Ministry of Environment in Haiti is asking us to hold an international seminar there in January. The Energy Ministry of South Africa wants TREES at a clean energy conference in February. A new project we are assisting in the Philippines will grow trees to sustainably, and cleanly, produce electricity.

Trees, used as an energy source, take large quantities of carbon out of the atmosphere while they reduce the use of fossil fuels. And with all that, they rebuild the land, bring back water, and give poor people steady jobs. That's the triple whammmy.

Holiday Shopping



Send a Tree Planting Certificate to friends and loved ones this holiday season. This gift that helps the world's environment contains a personalized certificate verifying the planting of trees in someone's name, as well as a description of the project and the community where the trees are being planted.



You can order a certificate online at www.plant-trees.org.

Moringa Tree Distribution in Haiti

One of TREES' partners in Haiti, the **EDEM Foundation**, has begun providing health and environmental training to kids in Les Cayes.

In addition to discussing the importance of trees and reforestation, they are also specifically learning about the moringa tree which is used world-wide to address malnutrition.

The leaves of the moringa tree contain an amazing amount of vitamins and nutrients: Gram for gram, moringa leaves contain 7 times the vitamin c of oranges, 4 times the calcium of milk, 3 times the potassium of bananas, 2 times the protein of yogurt, and 4 times the vitamin A of carrots.

Trees for the Future has been distributing moringa seeds to schools, orphanages, and villages throughout the lowland tropics.

EDEM Foundation's goal is to have each student grow a moringa tree in his or her backyard.



Organization	City/Area
Green Tree Foundation, Poola Bazaar	Andhra Pradesh
Susruta Clinic, Gunadala Center	Andhra Pradesh
Lokshakti	Balasore
Vaigai River Conservation	Dindigul
Rural Development Society	Kanyakumari
Madurai Kamaraj University	Madurai
Community Development Organization (CDO)	Wangbal Manipur
Sumchinum Women Society	Manipur
Development Alternatives	New Delhi
Generation of Awareness and Rural Development Society (GARDS)	Prakasam District
Gangotree Social Organization	Orissa
Gandhi Grama Parivarthana Sangh	Woraiyur
Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (IRCED)	Sangli
Rural Community Trust	Tamil Nadu
Forest College and Research Institute	Tamil Nadu
Foundation for Research and Sustainable Development (FRSD)	Tamil Nadu
Rajamanickam	Tamil Nadu
Rural Development Afforestation Society (RDAS)	Tamil Nadu
Rural Organization for Social Education and Development (ROSED)	Tamil Nadu
Sarawathi Women Education Service Training Improvement Center	Tamil Nadu
Youth's Network to Educate and Empower the Weak (YNEEW)	Tamil Nadu
Empowerment of Downtrodden People Society (EDPS)	Trichy District South
Snehum Network	Tamil Nadu

Current Projects

The majority of our work over the last two years has been conducted in Tamil Nadu, the southeastern region of the country that was devastated by the tsunami. Through a large network of local partners, we are implementing tree-planting projects as part of reconstruction activities aimed at rebuilding and fortifying the economic base of the community.

We are working with close to 40 local groups that are working on greening schools, reforesting hillsides, reclaiming degraded land, planting forest gardens with medicinal trees, and implementing agroforestry technologies that ensure food security for the rural poor.

Shiva Rea, with her organization **YOGADVENTURES**, created this "**Dance for Life**" program with the aim of planting 1 million trees in India in 2007, in partnership with Trees for the Future. They hope to raise \$100,000 by organizing a series of Yoga Trance Dances™ which will benefit the TREES India program.

Additionally, our long distance agroforestry training program has many members from India and is further increasing the knowledge base of the country. TREES Field Rep in Tiruvanamalai, **Subramanian Periyasamy**, is continually seeking ways to better help the communities that he and his team at RDAS serve.



Left: Subramanian, kneeling in the middle and holding a hand hoe, organizes a tree planting day.



Right: The children lend a hand.

Update from India: Partnering for Millions of Trees - from page 1

The *Fall 2006 Ipil-Seed News* explained a bit of Subramanian's work and highlighted the planting and use of neem trees, an indigenous Indian tree known as the 'pharmacy tree' for its numerous natural medicinal and insecticidal properties.

Plans for 2007

As our new partnership with Shiva Rea and YOGADVENTURES bears fruit, we plan on adding two field representatives and planting over 1,000,000 trees in 2007. TREES' new technician, Gorav Seth, will be traveling to India early in 2007 to assist our partners by delivering training on a variety of agroforestry-related topics, as well as by assisting with seed collection and distribution, nursery establishment, and agroforestry design. He will also be working with current Agroforestry Training Program graduates (see article-page 10) to make plans on further extending the agroforestry training course to more remote communities.

Useful Agroforestry Species Native to India

These are some of the local species that are extremely useful in agroforestry systems

Neem - *Azadirachta indica* - makes a powerful natural insecticide and is widely used medicinally

Moringa - *Moringa oleifera* - exceptionally nutritious edible pods and leaves, fast growing

Indian jujube - *Zizyphus mauritiana* - the "desert apple," extremely drought tolerant and resistant to grazing

Vetiver - *Vetiveria zizanioides* - grass key in erosion control, soil reclamation and stabilization

Tamarind - *Tamarindus indica* - edible, nitrogen fixer, drought tolerant, wind tolerant

Indian mesquite - *Prosopis spicigera* - extremely drought tolerant nitrogen-fixing tree

Welcome Gorav Seth!

We welcome Gorav Seth, our new staff technician based out of the Silver Spring office. Originally from Maryland, he contacted us while he was working on a project in Honduras to see if he could help support our work in that country. Now back in the DC area, he has joined us to focus on expanding our India program and will be heading there early next year. He is also managing the long-distance agroforestry training program, and plans on helping us to create a forest garden around our office in his spare time.

Gorav comes to TREES with a B.Sc in Plant Biology from UC Berkeley and a MBA from the George Washington University. During his undergraduate studies he learned much about agroforestry from his interest in edible plants, medicinal herbs, and sustainable agriculture. After graduating from Berkeley, he went on a two-person 1,000 mile sea kayaking trip down Baja California, followed by 3 months in Costa Rica living and working with a local farmer. Since then, he has worked at local nurseries, for other non-profit organizations, and has volunteered in India and Central America. When not at work, he enjoys kayak-

ing on the Chesapeake bay, making ceramic pots, and planting edible landscapes at all of his relatives' houses.



A New Training Center in Senegal

TREES Senegal Program began five years ago with the planting of 5,000 trees in one village. Since then it has grown to encompass 25 participating villages who managed to plant a **quarter of a million trees in 2006!**

None of this would have been possible were it not for the selfless contributions of **TREES Field Rep Omar Ndao**. Omar, now only 27 years old, has already lived a life full of tragedy and triumph, and today, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of families are benefiting from his work.

For the last fifteen years of his life, Omar worked as a farmer and tree planter in his home of Kaffrine, Senegal, 25 kilometers north of the Gambian border. Recognizing the loss of forest resources throughout his community, and with the inspiration and guidance from his father who was a dedicated tree planter, Omar organized community nurseries and distributed thousands of seedlings in his early 20's. Frustrated by locust invasions, droughts, and other setbacks, Omar and his father **Mohamed Ndao** requested help from the United States Peace Corps. **John Leary**, now TREES international programs manager, was placed in Omar's village in 2001 and they have been inseparable since then. Together, they have led a program that is helping communities produce 100% of their fuelwood and animal forage, while improving the soil on which their lives depend.

Since 2001, Omar has helped build a department-wide program that spans over 25 villages and has planted 500,000 trees, about half of which were planted in 2006 alone!

TREES Senegal program is currently focusing on three projects: 1) replicating successful **multipurpose windbreaks**, 2) advancing **biofuel production**, and 3) creating a **training site** to facilitate agroforestry extension throughout the Departments of Kaffrine and

Nganda.

The multipurpose windbreaks have often been mentioned in past issues of the *Johnny Ipil-Seed News*; they entail surrounding crop fields with thick tree barriers that protect soils and crops from the wind, thereby combating desertification while producing various marketable products.



Omar is taking the grassroots program to the next level by creating an agroforestry training site...and he started by making the bricks with his own hands!

and horse cart that passes the training site stops to look at what Omar has done to turn a degraded peanut field into an agroforester's dream full of new ideas.

The site, which is an actual working farm the supports Omar's family, shows how to integrate windbreaks, alley-cropping, composting, integrated pest management, fruit trees, field crops, and biofuel production all on the same piece of land - and how to do this with no money and little sweat.

Thrilled by the success of this program, the Senegalese Ministry of the Environment, the United States Peace Corps, and other partnering organizations have all pledged to send trainers, volunteers, and material support to help build this program.

John will be back in Senegal this winter, and he will bring us an update on 2007 plans for Senegal and a growing West Africa program.

Biofuel production in West Africa was the feature story of the *Fall 2006 Johnny Ipil-Seed News*, and is beginning to receive national attention in Senegal.

Now we are proud to report that Omar is taking TREES' grassroots program to the next level by creating an agroforestry training site that will help up facilitate training and the distribution of seed and seedlings throughout the two departments (counties) - and he started by making the bricks with his own hands! The site is on a main road that connects the cities of Kaffrine and Nganda. Every car, bus,

What Does a Quarter of a Million Trees Look Like? Visit Some of Our Tree Nurseries in Senegal



Two Decades & Millions of Trees - Update on Past projects in Africa

When planting the forests of our future while searching for an energy solution to solve the crisis of the present, it is always good to look back at where we've been, what we've accomplished and how our programs can grow and flourish from the seedlings of the past. With this in mind we sent out letters to all our past partners. Though we have a monitoring and evaluation system, close relationship, and continuous communication with our current partners throughout the world, we had lost touch with many of our partners who originally began projects in the late 80's and early 90's. Based on our evaluation of trees planted each year we have planted nearly 50,000,000 trees. However, this figure does not include those that have continued to collect seeds and plants thousands of trees on their own initiative. This article is the first of a three part series highlighting how small projects that began many years ago have grown into large acres of forests. We begin with the continent of Africa:

Over the last two decades Africa has been ravished by civil war, displaced refugees, depleting natural resources, the AIDS epidemic, malaria, malnutrition and more...

- *There are now over 4 million refugees in Africa*
- *4 million hectares of forests are cleared annually*
- *Nearly 30 million people are living with AIDS*
- *6000 children are orphaned by AIDS every day*
- *900,000 Africans die each year from Malaria*

The statistics can be overwhelming, but we ask you to look beyond the statistics. Look beyond the endless debates of large conferences and cocktail parties where the topics of civil rights, government corruption, and insurmountable foreign debt can leave you feeling that there is no hope for this beautiful continent. Look beyond to the small individual families, local institu-

tions, village organizations, and cooperative women's groups who rise each day and with nothing but their hands and a strong will are planting thousands and thousands of trees to secure their land and their future.

Some organizations focus on education, such as the Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture (KITA) which has trained more than 1500 prospective farmers and 800 experienced farmers on agroforestry and sustainable land management practices. Following graduation the farmers have access to free follow up consultancy and a revolving credit fund. KITA won the national Agroforestry Best Farmer Award in 1992. Since then

many graduates from KITA have won this award.

Others operate as cooperatives or member organizations whose tree planting efforts evolve into sustainable income generating activities. The 38 members of the Kemengo Tree Planting Project have planted over 57,000 trees mainly concentrating on the quick growing species such as Calliandra and Leucaena (from seeds we sent many years ago). According to the presidents of Kemengo, "the majority of members survive on their own small wood lots for firewood and income thru the sale of tree poles for building, not to mention saving the denuded environment. Land has been a limiting factor to many especially those with experience. This has forced some members to move outside the municipal boundaries to other neighboring counties and districts in search of expanses of land for large scale tree growing."

On the following page you will find 7 organizations from 4 countries highlighted for their tree planting initiatives. This represents a fraction of the tree planting efforts by our local partners. From education to tree growing to self-improved economic status, these people are more than statistics, they are the voices and future of Africa.

We had sent seeds and training materials to Wangari Maathai's Greenbelt Movement over 15 years ago. They planted more than 30 million trees.

Now we find that since the last time we spoke with the Association of Countrywide Afforestation in Uganda they have planted nearly 16 million.

It's amazing what community groups can do when they set their mind to it; we're here to help.

-Dave Deppner, Founder

Two Decades & Millions of Trees - Update on Past projects in Africa

Organization: Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agric.

Location: Kumasi, Ghana

of Trees Planted: 20,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1984

"Graduates of the Institute are noted for reviving collapsed farms. KITA's role in the rural development cannot be over emphasized. All its activities are aimed at Ghana's development."

Organization: Suntaa Nuntaa

Location: Wa (Upper West Region), Ghana

of Trees Planted: 34,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1990

Winner of the UNEP Saving the Drylands award for control of land degradation in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

Organization: Amos Owoko Ochola and family

Location: Uranga, Kenya

of Trees Planted: 5,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1990

"In my farm I do planting because trees are my daily bread"

Organization: Lake Victoria Permaculture

Location: Homa Bay, Kenya

of Trees Planted: 150,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1996

"Our project has had remarkable and great success with tangible results from the tree planting efforts since the project inception 10 years ago. The project continues to grow daily."

Organization: Ass. of Countrywide Afforestation

Location: Mengo-Kisenyi, Kampala, Uganda

of Trees Planted: 15,670,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1988

"Our tree planting projects have been a success and are growing excellently. We also make energy efficient stoves and harvest part of the tree for making charcoal."

Organization: Mangrove Forest Conserv. Society

Location: Port Harcourt, Nigeria

of Trees Planted: 5,000 Trees

Year Project Began: 1995

Mangrove Forest Conservation Society focuses on conservation of the Mangrove and Rainforest area of Epellama.

Organization: Kemengo Tree Planting Project

Location: Kabarole, Uganda

of Trees Planted: 57,000 Trees (38 members with an average of 1500 trees/per family)

Year Project Began: 1991

"Between 1997 and today, our project has become a role model in our district."

Congratulations Distance Program Graduates

Since the spring of this year, we have been distributing the Agroforestry Training Manual throughout the world. It has reached the hands of over 400 community leaders in over 35 countries.

The President of Honduras, farming associations, local organizations and partners, and Peace Corps programs are all requesting more and more copies to extend this global training program. On the bottom right is a list of our most recent graduates.

Congratulations!!

Now we are also developing online modules for many of our agroforestry lessons so that anyone can log on and learn up-to-date technology on sustainable agriculture and agroforestry.

"I would like to thank you for giving me this chance of participating in long distance agroforestry training program...in my village, I have to fight not only with physical darkness but also with social illiteracy and traditional concepts...the knowledge I gained from this training is of great importance to me and my community."

- Binod Neupane, Nepal

"I launched an agroforestry programme in Bas Congo Province based on Tree Nursery Local Initiatives. Thank you so much."

**-Gracia Matondo,
Democratic Republic of Congo**

Find out more at: plant-trees.org/resources.htm



Training Program Graduates

Lesly Grandin, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Jeff Horne, Los Angeles, USA
M.Venkatachalam, Tamilnadu, India.
Raymond Robitaille, Montréal, Canada
K.Velmurugan, Thalaivasal, India.
Dr.sudagani srinivas, Andhra Padesh, India
Ikponke Nkanta Uyo, Nigeria
Michael Couture, Dallas, USA
Jaff Francis Agiamntebom, Cameroon
Adam Welti, Ghessat, Morocco
Makatiani Francis Imbahala, Kitale, Kenya
Fokas E. Mlelwa, Mtwara, Tanzania
Ponny Bukenya, Kampala, Uganda
Lutangu Amulimukwa, Lusaka, Zambia
Martha Michael, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Macdonald Mkandawire, Mzuzu, Malawi
Francis Mondembe Menyoli, Buea, Cameroon
N. Selvaraj, Tamil Nadu, India
Linus Expang Abgbor, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Binod Neupane, Pokhara, Nepal

TREES New Video: "It's Amazing What a Seed Can Grow!"

Thanks in large part to a grant provided by **Andrew Beath** and the **Earthways Foundation**, the tireless efforts of professional movie producer **Marc Ian Barasch**, and to the generosity of many technical people both here and in California, TREES now has a video documentary telling about our work and how this organization was started.

You can see this video on our website (plant-trees.org) or, if you would like a copy to show friends, just let us know and we will send one to you right away.

The documentary is just over 8 minutes in length and is filled with scenery and action from your projects in many parts of the world. It features **Dave Deppner** as he recounts many of the more dubious situations your organization has found itself in over the years. It also stars **Tebabu Assefa** who is actively building our Ethiopia program for 2007 and beyond.

Copies of the DVD are available from us at the Ruppe Center.



Behind the scenes: TREES' staff and the studio technicians look on as Dave was transformed into a movie star.

Terri Kempton, New San Francisco Representative

Some of you may have met Terri recently at the San Francisco Green Festival. A graduate of Peace Corps Nicaragua and the University of Maryland program in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development, Terri has been volunteering for Trees for the Future at conferences and trade shows while working for Sustainable Conservation Partnership for the Prevention of Invasive Plant Introductions through Horticulture in San Francisco.

She is now helping us to establish a stronger presence on the west coast, where she is our primary liaison.

If you are in the Bay area and would like to get in touch with Terri, you can reach her at terri@treesftf.org.



A Billion Trees???

In November, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), with the help of **Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai**, announced a program that is intended to plant a billion trees!!

We salute their intention and concern about global climate change, especially at this time when more and more climate studies tell us that we have only about six years remaining to implement programs to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. We also point out the obvious: that there is already far too much carbon in the atmosphere, that we must now concentrate on removing a part of that carbon, and that, as a practical matter, the only way we can do this is by restoring tree cover to the barren lands of the Developing World.

We learned about the UNEP plan just as the Green Festival in San Francisco was closing. This was fortuitous because so many people who visited our booth asked how they could plant trees to "reduce their carbon footprint," indicating their concern for doing their part to reduce the threat of global warming.

Now the UNEP is asking people around the world to contact them to report how many trees they intend to plant in 2007. Thanks to the help of all our members, plus a great many environmentally concerned foundations and businesses, TREES has a goal to plant 5,600,000 trees in 2007. We intend to contact UNEP and make this pledge - as our initial plan. The number could

grow if more people decide to support this effort. Here is how it can be done:

A typical family of four would need to plant about 3,200 trees in our program in order to annually offset all of their carbon emissions, year after year. This would be a one-time cost of approximately ten cents (\$0.10) per live, healthy, permanent tree planted. TREES offers to plant these 3,200 trees at a one time cost of \$300,00 (tax deductible). We will provide the donating family a letter telling them where their trees are planted, together with a certificate from the community leader.

The United Nations is pointing the way. At the same time, they are saying that it's all up to the rest of us. Here at TREES, we believe that it is possible if enough of us are ready to work together and so we offer this plan.



TREES Founder Dave Deppner (right) speaks with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai at the Kenyan Embassy. Together, they have helped plant over 80 million trees.

Visitors at the Ruppe Center



Left: **Tadesse Meskala** (second from left), head of the **Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union** in Ethiopia and star of the new movie *Black Gold* about the global coffee industry, and members of the **Abol Coffee**, one of TREES new partners in Ethiopia, met in September and October to make plans for a campaign in southern Ethiopia that will aid as many as 300,000 coffee farmers.

Right: **Louis Nkembe**, (standing on left) director of the **Environment and Rural Development Foundation** in southwest Cameroon, also visited the Ruppe Center recently to seek assistance in starting new reforestation projects.

Thank You Volunteers

In the past couple of months, TREES had the pleasure of attending the Green Festivals in both Washington D.C. and San Francisco, where we joined hundreds of green-minded businesses and organizations and made many new friends and partnerships in the process.

If you were there you know what an uplifting even the Green Festival can be, and we hope to see you again next year!

We would specifically like to thank all of our volunteers who made this year such a success: **Brandy and Hamid Lellou, Baka Ndao, Elizabeth Sullivan, Sylvie Leary, Matthew Ruggiero, Mike Heilmann, Judy Peabody, David Lesikar, and Terri Kempton.**

If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, contact Brandy and she'll help you find out how you can become involved: communications@treesftf.org.



Volunteers Elizabeth Sullivan and Sylvie Leary enjoy meeting Washingtonians at the DC Green Festival.

Opinion: Where Do We Go From Here?

Those of you who regularly read our Johnny Ipil-Seed News have probably noted that the tempo of our work speeded up considerably over the past twelve months.

You're seeing new ideas at work, new partnerships and alliances, here in the States as well as overseas, and new kinds of projects with more leaders in these communities joining with us. Before this year is over, we will have helped people plant nearly 50 million trees since we first opened our door on a cold December day back in 1988.

Are we bragging? Well, yeah, maybe we are. But not so much about ourselves as about all the wonderful people who make all this happen - the people working so hard to bring tree cover and forests back to the world's degraded lands. And to you and thousands of other good friends who make all of this possible. Some high points of 2006:

Our active membership increased by more than 40% to more than 7,100 of us as this year ends.

Our staff grew as

Loretta Collins, **Brandy Lellou**, and **Gorav Seth** came aboard, increasing our technical capabilities and allowing us to provide more on-site training and planning assistance.

Surprising ourselves, we even got into the oil business through **John Leary's** program in West Africa, which is helping marginalized rural families who have discovered that a little tree called "Jatropha" can sustainably produce organic fuel to the benefit of the environment and at less than half the cost of imported fossil fuel. Now remote villages have lights so children can

study in the evening.

Taking the idea of renewable energy a step farther, we have been asked by **Haiti's Minister of the Environment** to conduct an international conference on the environment. The idea is to bring together investors and business leaders, land management technicians and rural leaders to determine how we can plant the trees that will save Haiti's hillsides while also sustainably producing the woody biomass that will provide good jobs and also make renewable energy



Unaware that they would be meeting at the beach, Dave ended up being the only one wearing a suit at the beach. This and other meetings with Shiva Rea led to the creation of the Dance for Life program which seeks to plant over one million trees in India.

available locally and for export.

Still working with renewable energy and its many environmental benefits, we're assisting another group, in the Philippines, over the next five years to plant some 4.5 million trees to sustainably power a large dendro-thermal electric plant.

Along the way we met two other amazing people: **Shiva Rea**, who has started an international movement called the **Dance for Life** and is now raising a fund to plant a million trees in India in the year ahead; also **Andrew Beath** of the **Earthways Foundation**, who



wants to help us plant another million trees in Ethiopia and Madagascar. Andrew and another great friend, **Marc Barasch**, also helped us produce a short (8 minute), professionally done video presentation about your organization, which you will soon be available on dvd or to view on our website (plant-trees.org).

So you might ask: "What's next to be done?". My personal goal is to do all I can to give a voice to the people of the developing communities we serve. I believe they have an important story to tell and that we will all benefit greatly by hearing what they have to say.

The fact is that we - all of us sharing this planet -now face a grave and imminent threat called global climate change. And further, the only way we can remove that threat is by all of us working together to resolve our common needs and our fears. Wouldn't it be a terrible way to end things if, knowing the danger, knowing we had it in our power to do something about it, we simply looked the other way because we couldn't find a way to work together?

Look at it like this: we are often asked by concerned people how an American family could erase their "carbon footprint" - the amount of carbon a family of four puts into the global atmosphere every year. We tell them such a family could do this by planting about 3,200 trees which, in our program, costs about \$300.00

But...

...but where would this family find room to plant them? Especially considering that the trees would need to grow in the humid tropics to grow fast enough to take this much carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere every year.

In other words, those of us concerned about putting so much pollution into the atmosphere really need the help of people in these faraway villages to resolve the threat of climate change and many other matters that should concern all of us. Likewise, the people of these developing lands need our help to make such projects possible.

At a time when our climate is already changing noticeably, it's been discovered that porpoises, vampire bats, even cockroaches, are developing new social con-



From the left: TREES Advisor on Haiti Franz Stuppard, Dave Deppner, movie director John 'JD' Davis, and producer Marc Barasch take five during filming for TREES' new video which carries the them: "It's Amazing What a Seed Can Grow!"

cepts, finding ways to work together to meet the common threat in their rapidly changing environment. Hopefully, while there is still time, we will also be able to find how much we need each other and how to work to that end. I'd hate to end up surrendering this planet to a cockroach.

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HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Send a Tree Planting Certificate to friends and loved ones this holiday season.

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