



Living With Nature

First Living with Nature

Founder and Director of the Center for Health and Global Environment Dr. Eric Chivian, conservation biologist Dr. Tundy Agardy, and founder and president of the Center for a New American Dream Betsy Taylor at the first Living With Nature Program, February 2004.

Kevin Frey

In February 2004, the CBC initiated a public program series designed to reach a broad audience with the message that individuals can help conserve biodiversity through everyday choices. The first program, "Living With Nature: Everyday Actions to Sustain Our Planet," attracted over 700 people to a resource fair followed by a roundtable discussion moderated by WNYC

Radio's Brian Lehrer. From consumption patterns to invasive species to what we eat for lunch each day, the main message of the evening was that everyone has an important role to play in meeting the challenges of the biodiversity crisis.

More and more, people are beginning to be concerned about where their food comes from, how it affects their well-being and the well-being of their community, and its vital link to biodiversity. In October 2004 the CBC offered a resource fair and panel discussion exploring food as a celebration of nature, a link to good health, a delicious indulgence, and a tool for conservation. The resource fair gave people the opportunity to talk with local farmers about how their produce is grown, and to learn about the rich variety of crops that can be found virtually at our doorstep. The panel discussion featured Dan Barber, chef/owner of Blue Hill at Stone Barns and Creative Director of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, a working farm and education center; Joan Dye Gussow, Professor Emeritus of Nutrition and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and author of *This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader*; Mollie Katzen, author of the classic *Moosewood Cookbook*; and Tod Murphy, founder of the Farmers Diner in Barre, Vermont, which relies almost exclusively on locally produced food. The panel discussion was moderated by award-winning filmmaker and novelist Ruth Ozeki, author of *My Year of Meats* and *All Over Creation*, and focused on topics such as the environmental and economic benefits of choosing locally grown food, and how eating a more diverse diet can support biodiversity and can be healthier too.

Composting

Tara DePorte of the Lower East Side Ecology Center introduces a young Museum visitor to worm composting at "A Resource Fair for Local Action."

Felicity Arengo

In fall 2005 the "Living With Nature" program focused on children. A resource fair provided information on sustainable activities, toys, parties, school and art supplies, and holiday fun for kids. A panel discussion moderated by Dr. Eleanor Sterling, Director of the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, explored how to nurture meaningful values and environmental stewardship in children in the face of an increasingly consumer-driven society. Panelists included child development specialist Louise Chawla, International Coordinator of UNESCO's "Growing Up in Cities" project; Juliet Schor, author of *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*; Betsy Taylor, Founder and President of the Center for a New American Dream; and Julie Fox Gorte, Director of the Calvert Social Research Department, who provided a corporate perspective on the topic.

In October 2006, in partnership with the New York City Soil & Water Conservation District, the CBC presented "Living With Nature: Sustaining the New York Metropolitan Region's Biodiversity Through Local Action," a day-long conference that brought together representatives from academia, government, non-profit and scientific institutions, and the general public to share insights on what has worked in making New York City more sustainable and to identify goals for the future. In March 2008, in conjunction with World Water Day, the CBC is working with the AMNH Education Department to plan a public event focused on the importance of our water resources.

The United Nations has declared 2005–2015 the "Water for Life Decade." World Water Day at AMNH featured a series of panel discussions on water issues facing New York City, developing countries, and the global community. The Milstein Hall of Ocean Life was the setting for a special Water Resource Fair geared toward the whole family. Museum and local scientists were on hand, along with representatives from water conservation organizations including WaterAid America, Food & Water Watch, Riverkeeper, NYC Department of Environmental Protection, and others. Many children and families had a great time exploring water and conservation through hands-on activities.

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