

ETC Group announces the 2009 International Pie-in-the-Sky Contest for the Wackiest Geo-engineering Scheme Ever



You don't need to take a workshop to join the latest DIY (Do-It-Yourself) craze!

Now you can geo-engineer the great outdoors – all of it! Geo-engineering is the intentional manipulation of earth, oceans and atmosphere to stop climate change.

This Big Idea, thought up by geniuses in the North, the birthplace of greenhouse gas pollution, is pretty simple: We've already changed the climate without intending to (oops!), so why not tinker with it a bit more to try to change it back – fast – and we'll never have to rue our "sins of emission." If geo-engineering doesn't work, or if it makes things worse? Oops...

ETC Group wants to know your wackiest idea for a climate change techno-fix: Pies in the sky? Global whitewash? Making mountains out of mole-hills (to block out the sun)? The DIY geo-engineer who submits the most creative, original and ludicrous scheme – containing a nano-shred of logic, if no plausibility – will be deemed the winner. Your winning idea will be illustrated, posted on our web site, sent to you and distributed far and wide. **The deadline is – no surprise – April Fools' Day (1st April 2009).** Send an explanation of your geo-engineering scheme, including how it would combat the effects of climate change, to geoengineer@etcgroup.org. Accompanying explanatory diagrams/drawings are welcome, but not necessary.

www.etcgroup.org

Competition will be stiff. Professional geo-engineers have gotten a head-start and they've set the wacky-bar high. The following schemes, for example, have already been proposed (by people who weren't joking):

1) DIY Pompeii:

Fill balloons with sulfur-containing gas and send them up to the stratosphere. When the balloons burst, sulphate particles (i.e., brimstone) will be released. That's what happens during a volcanic eruption. The sulfate-filled skies will enhance the earth's ability to reflect solar radiation (though the resultant pollution will unavoidably cause pre-mature deaths).

2) Sunken Treasure?

"Fertilize" large areas of the ocean's surface with iron particles to spur phytoplankton growth. The plankton will absorb CO₂ while they live and will, in theory, take the carbon down to the depths of the ocean when they eventually sink to their watery graves. (There is no scientific evidence that this actually happens, and the unnatural phytoplankton blooms could cause unintended affects in the marine ecosystem. Go to www.etcgroup.org to read about LOHAFEX, a recent, controversial German-Indian ocean fertilization experiment in the Scotia Sea.)

3) Not-So-Cheap Sunglasses:

Build 16 trillion sunshades (the size of a sheet of paper) and launch them in space 1.5 million km from Earth to deflect sunlight. Estimates are that 20 launchers would each need to shoot up 800,000 screens every 5 minutes for 10 years for the scheme to work. The cost would come close to the current global financial bailout - a few trillion dollars.

4) Sand(wich) Wrap:

Cover 67,000 square miles of the Sahara, Arabian and Gobi deserts in white plastic sheets to reflect sunlight back into space. Unfortunately, blanketing the deserts will kill most plant and animal life underneath and shift local and regional weather patterns.

For more background info on geo-engineering, see ETC Group's Communiqué, "Gambling with Gaia." www.etcgroup.org

Can you top these geo-engineering schemes? Send us your proposal to geoengineer@etcgroup.org. The contest closes April Fools' Day (1st April 2009). The winner will be announced on www.etcgroup.org Earth Day, 22nd April 2009.

