

# voice of humanity: The Extinction Crisis and Society

## The Extinction Crisis and Society

25 Sep 2004 @ 21:35, by Roger Eaton

We are making good progress on the programming for the Jewish / Muslim email dialogue.

For the best writeup yet of the Voice of Humanity vision, see the earlier article entitled "[A New Heaven](#)".

The New Visions for Culture and Society Committee of the [Threshold Foundation](#) has offered a [\\$50,000 grant](#) "to proactively address societal awareness of mass extinction and our responsibility in creating and reversing it." The [current mass extinction](#) is very serious, with projections of loss of 50 percent of all species by 2100 at the current rate. I have applied for the grant with the following LOI (Letter of Inquiry):



The extinction crisis is a practical indicator of humanity's dangerously destructive impact on the planet, but it requires an idealistic solution: world peace, a just and sustainable world economy, universal education and health care, a stable or slowly declining human population. A tall order, but all these ends must be achieved in any case, or, very plausibly, Society will face its own Extinction Crisis; it is an all or nothing proposition. Forced by necessity and beckoned by a promise, we can expect a great upwelling of human endeavor to accomplish even what seems impossible in the current state of affairs.

Not only practically, but also in a deep religious sense, the extinction crisis serves as a key to resolving the human crisis. Religious compassion complements the scientific notion of the selfish gene with the heartfelt belief that life is One, even that Life itself is alive. We mourn the loss of species as a tangible impoverishment of the world and ourselves. We realize that if life is One, then humanity is One, and it is from the viewpoint of humanity as a whole that practical solutions to the extinction crisis emerge.

With the big picture in mind, then, what I propose is to create a "Voice of Life" as a springboard for a "Voice of Humanity", which in turn will build a human consciousness, provide a platform for coordinating positive human energies, and administer a salutary shock to the thinkers and movers of the planet. As progenitor, the Voice of Life will have an inside track in the process, making sure that the Voice of Humanity does not ignore the needs of God's creatures. The following paragraphs will bring these thoughts down to earth.

The underlying idea is create a peer-to-peer network of online forums, one for each of the species or genera, accumulating them by habitat into biozones and thence to the global level. Forum participants will adopt a favorite animal or plant and locale and, over the course of a year, will write messages to represent the interests of their adopted species first, then their adopted habitat, then zone and finally Life on Earth. These messages will be fed back in the forums to the participants to be rated for interest and approval. At each level, there will be one winning message for each forum, culminating in a single message that represents Life as a whole.

This culminating message, with input from around the world, will be newsworthy. Of course, there is no guarantee that the Voice of Life will address the extinction crisis; however, since that is the big story, odds are that it will. In any case, at the level of the individual participant, probably mostly high school and college age students, interest in the fate of the species will be awakened.

The process of putting together the Voice of Life will necessitate the building of a global coalition, and this coalition will inevitably have its own ideas how to proceed, but we can provide some good ideas as a starter plan.

First, the message that represents Life will be an annual production. Second, school classes from middle school through college are prime sources for participants. Third, the youthful energies of the participants can be enlisted towards an annual Global Parade of the Animals and Plants to occur in many locations on the same day, timed to publicize the Voice of Life message for the year. Parade participants will greatly enjoy the costumes and festivities, and the production of the parade will cement the local groups. Parade participants will be asked to enlist supporters to donate money through the participants. This is the Aids Walk idea, which is a brilliant concept, since the supporters buy into the Voice of Life themselves, greatly magnifying its cultural significance, and at the same time providing the funding needed to make the movement grow. A portion of the money raised will be donated up the ladder to fund organizations at the zone and global level. (As a practical matter, the divvy between the amount of money that goes into actually preserving habitats and the amount that goes into political and organizational activities must be left to the organizations created as part of the overall movement.)

We may expect that within the structure of the Voice of Life, a Voice of Humanity will be nurtured. Life requires humanity to get its house in order. Heading towards a 9 billion plus peak population, we are under the necessity of utilizing all our resources efficiently if we are not to exceed the carrying capacity of the biosphere. The process of creating the Voice of Humanity will provide a rallying point for persons of goodwill everywhere, and we will greatly increase our influence by coordinating our efforts on a world scale.

To be sure, 50 thousand dollars is not enough, even with the advantage of the Internet and a shoestring mentality. However, 50 thousand dollars is enough to get the online

forums built as an open source project within one year. (Open source means the resulting code will be freely available for download.) The budget would be 40 thousand for programming and ten thousand for publicity to attract initial participants for the second year, chiefly from the Los Angeles area. Second and third year grants of an additional \$50,000, contingent upon satisfactory progress would be needed to get the Voice of Life off the ground. The second year budget would be 20 thousand for programming maintenance, and \$30,000 to establish a local Los Angeles organization with a part time director. Finding the right director will be the key to the project. By the end of the second year, we should know if the project is going to succeed. If it looks good, then the third year budget would go to the new organization and be aimed heavily at the first Los Angeles Animals and Plants Parade, targeting schools and religious groups across ethnic lines in this extremely diverse city. Once the parade is institutionalized, then the process will have become self-sustaining.

All this seems easily replicable. Success in Los Angeles will spark sister cities kinds of efforts and we can hope that the fundamental appeal of the Voice of Life / Animals and Plants Parade combination will ignite a worldwide movement.

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