

## Localize food production



Our single greatest challenge in the coming years will be to simply feed ourselves. It is vitally important that we can become independent, and even abundant, with the food we can provide each other once our oil-dependent infrastructures reduce to collapse.

Transition Towns promote local farmers markets, fruit trees in public spaces, community gardens, personal gardens, and urbanized "square-foot gardening". The more land we have dedicated to sustainable local food production the less people will panic when it comes time to survive beyond our normal supply lines.

## Localize sustainable energy



Surviving is one thing, but keeping civilization intact (like government services, education, etc) requires a significant amount of energy and the infrastructure to support that energy. In a post-peak world we will need to fill this 'energy gap', which we previously relied so heavily on oil and coal to fill. To compensate for these shortages we will want to use as many different types of energy as possible. This new and imperfect mix of energy sources needs to be both sustainable and local.

Transition Towns promote Energy Smart Grids that combine Wind, Solar, Tidal and Thermal energy sources. Energy Smart Grids can efficiently distribute this energy mix by compensating and prioritizing when there are shortages. Transition Towns also promote: the smarter use of home heating and insulation; solar hot water heating; and energy efficiency in general- which helps reduce how much energy we actually rely on- which will help ease the task of filling our steadily-increasing energy gap.

## Create an Energy Descent Action Plan



Central to Transition Town efforts is the creation of a community-designed **Energy Descent Action Plan** (EDAP). This long-term response plan- written by the local community, local institutions and local council -provides a unifying blue-print by which individuals and organizations can formally adapt to a decreasing energy supply and intensifying climate. EDAPs can likely contain: intergenerational plans for urban redevelopment; implementation of an energy smart grid; conversion schemes for multi-purpose public spaces; and many other essential subjects.

The EDAP document also acts as an official agreement by the community to dedicate themselves to the single, positive purpose of transitioning to a different lifestyle safely, responsibly and together.

## Reskill people | Rethink business



The global economy will continue to undergo massive fluctuations from the external forces of peak oil and climate change and therefore industry and commerce will need to adapt. Locally, this will translate to everyday people learning new skills and trades in less (fossil fuel) energy-intensive work, or adapting energy efficient practices to their existing professions. This also allows for many entirely new jobs and services to be created, like eco-design advisors, energy accountants, eco-retrofitters, and many more. Thankfully, during this time, innovation will thrive.

## Transform urban environments



Our cities and towns cannot continue as they are, and so it is inevitable that the very infrastructure of these environments must change. With community and council involvement, Transition Towns map out the inter-generational (over many decades) re-urbanization of these areas to **smaller, more walkable communities** with denser residential areas, multi-purpose public spaces, light rail systems, mass-commuter lanes and extensive dedicated bikeways & walkways that represent and support the necessary changes we need to make to match the steady decline of available energy.

## Create resilient communities



The term resilience, as it applies to Transition Towns, describes "*the ability to endure an external shock (from the effects of climate change and peak oil)*". People who prepare for these events will be more "resilient", however there will be people (and even countries) who won't be prepared, and some of these people will panic.

Many will have to migrate to other parts of the world, others will have to find housing for a sudden population growth, and others still may become so desperate that they hurt others in order to survive. The idea of resilience also means preparing for people less prepared and being able to help them. If the message of what kind of difficulties climate change and peak oil can bring is spread to enough people, then the public urgency to adapt sooner will help everyone, including those people who adapt late.

## Adopt local currencies



With the ever-increasing fluctuations of the global financial market, the rapid successions of boom and bust will play havoc with our national currencies, therefore the need to introduce and embrace alternative currencies that complement our standard national currency. This will help boost and protect local businesses and trade. Peak oil will reverse globalization no matter what we do, and adopting a local alternate currency is a responsible strategy to mitigate these effects.

## Save the Planet



This pamphlet has attempted to summarize the greatest challenges the world faces, and what people can do about them (on just one piece of paper). This information hasn't been sugar-coated, which may shock some people, but if you've read it, and now realize the enormity of these problems, and yet, despite all that, you *still* want to save the planet? ...now you know how!

Learn about the Transition Town in your area by going to:

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# What we're up against...

## Runaway Climate Change

A basic understanding of climate change is that our pollution of carbon dioxide (the burning of fossil fuels) collects in the upper atmosphere and, like a blanket over the earth, traps in heat. The more pollution there is, the more heat gets trapped, and the hotter the planet gets.

Thankfully, nature has many self-regulating measures to cool this excess heat. For example, hurricanes: When an ocean becomes too warm, hurricanes are able to release an ocean's surface heat quickly, like a pressure cooker, and distribute the cooled water over the coastlines. Cloud formations are another balancing mechanism- created by heat, with the ability to cool.

These self-regulating systems, or "negative feedbacks" are working all the time to balance the heat our pollution causes, however, we are now polluting faster than they are able to keep up with. In fact, if we stopped all greenhouse gas pollution in the world right this second, and never produced any more ever again, the planet will **continue to heat for another sixty years**. With the enormous momentum our previous era of pollution has initiated, it would still take the planet's natural cooling systems **sixty years** to slow this current rate of heating to a stop.

What more worries climate scientists however is **Runaway Climate Change**: When climate change becomes **self-sustaining**. This is the point where negative feedbacks are pushed so far that they flip the other way and become **positive feedback loops**- sending the environment into a vicious cycle of overheating. If we ever pass that dangerous tipping point it no longer matters if we reduce our pollution or not, the planet will heat beyond what is sustainable for life, bar **only a few places** that remain livable, and it will be thousands of years before it can return to the way it is today (instead of just sixty years if we all stopped polluting this second).

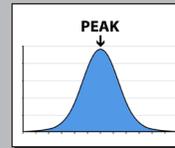
An example of a **positive feedback loop** is when ice glaciers in the Arctic melt away to reveal the land beneath them. Without the ice to reflect most of the sunlight away, this darker exposed land absorbs much more heat. This warmer land then melts more of the ice near it, revealing more land, which heats up to melt more ice, and so on. If the planet is unable to cool back down enough, this positive feedback loop continues, and eventually the ice won't be able to return in the Winter months when it should.

The Earth has already begun heating up and will continue to get hotter. As it does, droughts will lengthen and weather patterns will fluctuate to greater extremes. The closer we reach the tipping point of Runaway Climate Change the more the Earth will become very different from what it is now, and **so will society at large**. Water will become increasingly scarce, as will food. Crops will be much harder to grow, while vast amounts of people won't be able to live in the areas they do now, therefore the few places less affected by Climate Change will become overrun by refugees from these uninhabitable parts of the globe. What will happen when these less-affected areas become overcrowded and cannot accept any more people? What will that look like? Violence will most likely break out, and more importantly, wars may even be waged over things we once took for granted.

## Global Peak Oil

When a country finds an oil field, and then pumps oil from it, this country is "producing" oil. Now here's a question: **Which country was the world's biggest producer of oil from 1859 all the way up to 1975?** If you thought Saudi Arabia you'd be wrong. It was, in fact, The United States of America. Today the U.S. is only producing a quarter of what they once were, and instead of being the world's largest **producer** of oil they are now the world's largest **importer**. So how did the U.S. go from being the biggest **producer** in 1975 to the biggest **importer** today? The answer is: **They peaked**.

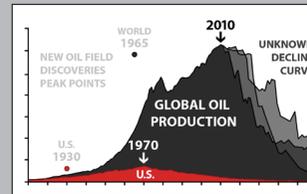
When the amount of oil a country is able to produce reaches its **maximum output** (or peak) it doesn't mean they suddenly run out of oil, it just means the country will **never produce any more oil than this amount** ever again- and what follows is an inevitable and permanent decline to the end.



The U.S. oil peak was in 1970, and even once they developed better technology to pump the oil out faster, they still couldn't produce more than the peak amount. In fact, pumping the oil out faster simply meant they run out of the remaining oil faster, and the decline from the peak gets even steeper. Not realizing this, the U.S. continued to demand **more oil** than they were able to produce themselves and the gap between what they had and what they needed **forced them to start looking to other countries to import oil from**, and they've had to keep doing that ever since.

This peak phenomenon (what looks like a bell curve on a graph) also applies to the amount of **new oil fields** being discovered. The U.S. reached its peak of discovering new oil fields in 1930, and would never find as many oil fields ever again- this was 40 years before it's peak in oil production.

So the big question is this: **What happens once oil production peaks for the world as a whole?** What happens after the **global peak** in oil when we can no longer supply global demand? Since we don't have an oil-rich planet nearby we only have what is left here. Keep in mind that the discovery of new oil fields for the world peaked in 1965. This problem is enormous.



Oil is at the very heart of modern civilization and we're only now starting to realize how much we take it for granted. Most of the way we grow our food, run our industries, and transport people and cargo around this planet is **dependent** on oil. (Below is a short list of products made from oil).\* The deeper we drill the harder it is to extract and the more expensive it becomes. Worse still, when the economy suffers then oil production (after the peak) also suffers. When it costs just as much to extract the oil as the oil is worth, or when it takes a barrel to produce a barrel, then production of oil will stop altogether. If it isn't profitable or efficient to extract, whatever oil is still in the ground will stay there, making the decline from the peak even steeper. Collectively we are simply not prepared for this.

...but what can I do about it?

## Join a Transition Town

A **Transition Town** is a group of people who organize locally to engage and motivate their **entire community** in making a responsible and educated **transition to a safe and happier future**- something that is only possible with a grounded public awareness in Global Peak Oil and Runaway Climate Change.

Once we pass the peak in global oil production, and as we get nearer to the point-of-no-return with Climate Change, our world is going to change dramatically. How we deal with these approaching crises on a practical level is a question both mainstream media and politicians still shy away from answering, which is why local people are getting together in groups, all over the world, to answer it for themselves.

These local groups are called **Transition Towns**.

Joining a Transition Town is a positive and pro-active response to both Climate Change and Peak Oil.

And these are the things they do...

## Raise public awareness

Chances are that before reading this pamphlet you may have never even heard of Peak Oil, or knew about the term "runaway" Climate Change. The fact that this knowledge is not known by everyone underlines our unpreparedness for the future and the urgency to educate people about what they can do to prepare- even if this preparation simply means having the ability to respond calmly.

Transition Towns hold regular "Green Screen" events in local cinemas or public venues, they donate education material to local video stores (free to rent), and hold "teach-ins" in their local institutions, schools and homes. This pamphlet and others like it are also part of this awareness-raising effort, however one of the most basic and effective ways to get this message out is to simply speak up when these issues are raised in conversation. Don't let ignorance go unchallenged. Be brave, be heard.

\* Products that use oil as an essential component are: fertilizers, insecticides, synthetic rubber, ammonia, cleaning products, polyester, nylon, fabrics, dyes, cosmetics, medicines, paint, enamel, wax, asphalt, tar... and almost everything made of plastic!