

Our planet is in peril

Site showcases the Earth's beauty, threats to its health and solutions

Tomorrow is Earth Day, so it's a good time to reflect on the state of our planet. Climate change is already affecting the world in dramatic ways. Hurricanes are becoming more frequent and severe. Ocean acidification is bleaching coral reefs. Droughts, wildfires and other extreme weather-related events are becoming the new normal.

Governments and businesses with a stake in the status quo can't or won't move quickly enough to implement corrective measures. It's up to the people to educate themselves and take action by changing bad habits and voting in politicians who will act in our best interests.

Ourplanet.com is a good website to visit for education on the issues facing the Earth — and inspiration to act. The site is the online companion for the Netflix series of the same name. It's the product of a four-year collaboration between the streaming service, the World Wildlife Fund and Silverback films.

Both the site and the series feature breathtaking cinematography of some of the planet's most magnificent creatures and landscapes. By showing us how beautiful and



KEVIN O'NEILL
InSites

beneficial balanced ecosystems are, the producers hope viewers will come to care enough about the natural world that they will act to save it.

When you visit the site you are greeted with a series of video clips. A massive blue whale and her calf swim majestically through the sea, followed by icebergs calving off an ice blue glacier and a regal tiger gently padding along a snow-covered ridge. You're immediately entranced by nature's beauty.

As you scroll down the page you encounter links to videos and other sections of the site that take you around the world to different habitats. You can explore the frozen polar regions, jungles, forests, grasslands, freshwaters and oceans. Each section exposes you to the beauty of the habitat, as well as the problems it faces and the solutions to them.

There are also behind-the-scenes videos of the making of the films. An interactive globe lets you explore where you want and see how the regions have changed since humans arrived on the scene. There's also a section dedicated to providing educational resources to children.

The site is beautiful to look at. Spectacular photos, videos and graphics accompany the features. The navigation can sometimes lead you astray, but it's easy enough to find your way back.

We're faced with an existential crises. The good news is that many of the solutions are already known, and some are even being employed in parts of the world. The bad news is that if we can't get the powers to be to implement these solutions more quickly and broadly, it might be too late to make a meaningful difference.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.

