



10 Minutes For The Planet

Protect and Educate ©

by *Valentine Rinner*

Hi and welcome to this week's episode of 10 minutes for the Planet. Last week we talked about what our government had put together this summer in terms of environmental politics. Between Nicolas Hulot's personal financial embarrassment, a poor reception of the Climate Plan and the General Assembly on Food and Agriculture kicking off after the announcement of subsidy cuts for French organic agriculture there is enough to be discouraged by the ambition of a government that calls the international community to "Make the Planet Great Again"...

However people everywhere in the country are actively working to protect and educate about the environment. Environmental festivals this summer such as the Alternatiba climate camp, "L'arbre qui marche" alcohol-free music festival or the Mazonric festival have all been very successful.

The summer is over but thanks to the internet some summer festivals continue. On July 28th, Greenpeace France launched the 2017 Greenpeace Film Festival, an online documentary festival to inform people about environmental issues and talk about positive initiatives. The Greenpeace Film Festival is the first 100% online environmental film festival. 28 movies in 7 categories are presented: biodiversity and ecosystems, climate, economy and finance, energy, ecological transition, food and agriculture, and waste and pollution. Votes are open till mid-October to select a winner in each category. There will then be a final vote late October to select a single winner. You can go online to www.greenpeacefilmfestival.org to watch the documentaries and vote for your favorite ones!

If you want to go from an online to a local initiative, we can thank Minister Hulot for the online platform "J'agis pour la Nature", the platform launched last year by the "Fondation de la nature et de l'homme", ex-Fondation Nicolas Hulot that Hulot founded in the nineties. The platform offers a significant amount of environmental volunteering opportunities. It appears to have been a big success this summer with people taking the opportunity of holiday time-off to commit to a few hours or a day to a specific environmental action with local organizations.

Anyone can look up opportunities on the online platform www.jagispourlanature.fr where different organizations call for volunteers. You simply need to choose your cause, register and show up. Examples of volunteering work include: cleaning up natural areas,

caring for the endangered animals, or inventorying wildlife. Some are family friendly and all are free or almost. A great way to rediscover your favourite holiday destination but also to continue volunteering back home as the platform is open year-long!

The big news of the end of this summer was the disclosure of research led by the French consumer organisation "UFC-Que choisir". Their study looked into conventional versus organic food prices in over 1,500 supermarkets across the country. The results have been infuriating consumers. Indeed the study revealed that organic foods are about 80% more expensive than their conventional counterparts, however about half of this difference is due to extra sales margin for supermarkets. Indeed, supermarkets take advantage of the general opinion that organic food has to be more expensive than conventional food in order to quietly boost their margin by an extra 40% compared to the same but conventional product. The good news here is that organic food is in fact less expensive than what we think! Hopefully the press scandal will pressure supermarkets to lower back their margins and the state to legislate on margin transparency. Maybe without the extra margins, the lower subsidies and the high priced organic labels, organic agriculture would in fact be cheaper than conventional agriculture... In the meantime favour local producers or alternative ways of buying your food if you don't want to be cheated by obscure economic strategies.

See you next week!