



Put Out the Damn Fire

Climate experts insist we'd better reduce carbon emissions by 6 percent a year if we hope for a livable planet, but politicians continue to greenlight coal mining, fracking, oil drilling and a Keystone pipeline expansion that former NASA climatologist James Hansen says means "game over" for the atmosphere.

Most of my friends, if they discuss the politics of global warming at all, shake their heads in disgust, then in despair and, finally, with a statement of resignation along the lines of, "We are so screwed."

But Kathleen Dean Moore says we don't get to sit this one out.

The nature writer and distinguished professor of philosophy emerita at Oregon State University believes that fighting climate change is a moral imperative because, simply put, it's wrong to ruin the world.

"We can draw down atmospheric carbon dioxide to livable levels," she says, "but not until we draw down the power of those ... enriched by destroying the conditions of human and ecological thriving."

Moore is the author of four collections of essays that weave philosophical inquiry with observations of the natural world (*Riverwalking*, *Holdfast*, *Pine Island Paradox* and *Wild Comfort*.) Over the last decade, her intimate connection to wilderness led to increasing alarm over its destruction. She examined the climate change discourse, found it lacked principled reasons for doing right by the planet and its inhabitants and asked 100 visionaries — including the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu — whether humans have an obligation to act on behalf of the future. Their responses were seeds for the 2010 book *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*, which Moore co-edited with Michael P. Nelson.

Moore spends most of her waking hours collaborating with activists and climate scientists and giving workshops, lectures and interviews. At her home in Corvallis on a sunny May morning, we spoke about the twin threats of climate change and corporate hegemony.