



Happy New Year 2012 from Linda

I wish you and your loved ones a very happy New Year. To celebrate the New Year, I asked my friend, Randall Lake, to meet me at Creekside Equestrian Center last week at 8:00 AM when the air was cold and fresh. As we watched the sun move over the property, the golden light that mingled with the frozen ground created a rising mist that was spectacular to behold. I hope you enjoy the photos of this simple, daily ritual I'm privileged to experience with my animal family.



During 2011, I re-ignited a commitment to finish my college degree, taking classes in water and irrigation system management, integrated pest management, and an Introduction to Environmental Science at College of Marin. These studies, and my own experiences and observations, have deepened my understanding of the earth's fragile condition. My hope for 2012 is that we can each do all that we can to help Mother Earth now and in the coming years. As the Nature Conservancy says: "All hands on Earth."

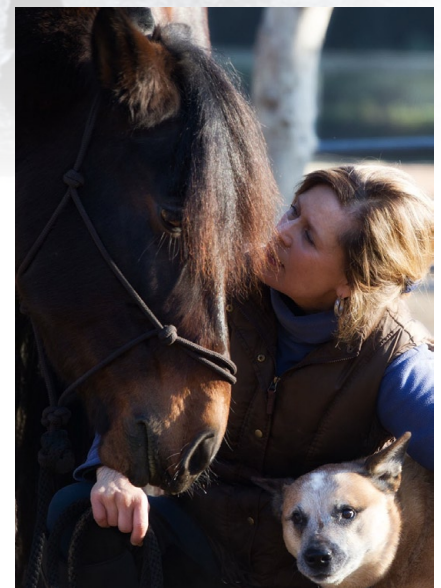


In the Introduction to Environmental Science class, we watched many poignant movies and a list is included for your reference. Some are available on line, others you will need to rent. They all tell a story of our earth, which, when woven together, paint a picture that urgently demands our attention. Here they are: "The Economics of Happiness," "The Story of Stuff," "Mindwalk," "The Population Bomb," "Fresh," "Why Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry," "Dirt-the movie," "Heat (Frontline report)," "Blue Gold," and "The 11th Hour." We didn't watch "Food, Inc.," but that, too, is on my list to watch. We also visited the Academy of Science at Golden Gate Park, and I heartily recommend a visit to their Food Café to learn more about the carbon footprint of various foods!



Here are some other steps you can take. Go to www.footprintnetwork.org and calculate your ecological "footprint." Marin County's footprint is even higher than the U.S. average (not a surprise). Basically, the calculator helps you find out how many earths are required to support your lifestyle. You can play with some factors to see how you might reduce your impact on the biosphere. You might also consider these actions: eat less meat and plant a tree. Eating less meat reduces your carbon and methane footprint right away. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the inefficient feeding of grain to animals, and reduce rain forest destruction (forests are cleared to raise cattle for export to the US). Planting and caring for a tree helps sequester carbon, improves the hydrologic cycle, reduces erosion, and creates wildlife habitat. By planting a tree we follow in the footsteps of the now-deceased Wangari Maathai, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, PhD, and founder of The Green Belt Movement. Her work in Kenya slowed deforestation and empowered women so they could break out of the cycle of poverty. When she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, she celebrated by planting a tree, and urged everyone to plant a tree as a symbol of commitment and hope for the world.

May the simple acts of life bring you great joy.



Linda