

## EGADS

### Arctic sea ice melting faster than expected

Arctic sea ice is melting so fast most of it could be gone in 30 years.

A new analysis of changing conditions in the region, using complex computer models of weather and climate, says conditions that had been forecast by the end of the century could occur much sooner.

A change in the amount of ice is important because the white surface reflects sunlight back into space. When ice is replaced by dark ocean water that sunlight can be absorbed, warming the water and increasing the warming of the planet.

The finding adds to concern about climate change caused by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, a problem that has begun receiving more attention in the Obama administration and is part of the G20 discussions under way in London.

"Due to the recent loss of sea ice, the 2005-2008 autumn central Arctic surface air temperatures were greater than 5 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit) above" what would be expected, the new study reports.

That amount of temperature increase had been expected by the year 2070.

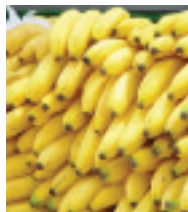
The new report by Muyin Wang of the Joint Institute for the Study of Atmosphere and Ocean and James E. Overland of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, appears in Friday's edition of the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

They expect the area covered by summer sea ice to decline from about 2.8 million square miles normally to 620,000 square miles within 30 years.

Last year's summer minimum was 1.8 million square miles in September, second lowest only to 2007 which had a minimum of 1.65 million square miles, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

The Center said Arctic sea ice reached its winter maximum for this year at 5.8 million square miles on Feb. 28. - AP

## ECO SIMPLE with Robin Tierney



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SPECIAL E

## ECO-SUD DUDS?



AP PHOTO

Shannon Brattebo poses to show how she would place a phosphate-free detergent tablet into a dishwasher in Spokane, Wash.

### Wash. residents rebel over soap, dirty dishes

**SPOKANE, WASH.** - The quest for squeaky-clean dishes has turned some law-abiding people in Spokane into dishwasher detergent smugglers.

They are bringing Cascade or Electrasol in from out of state because the eco-friendly varieties required under Washington state law don't work as well.

Spokane County became the launch pad last July for the nation's strictest ban on dishwasher detergent made with phosphates, a measure aimed at reducing water pollution. The ban will be expanded statewide in July 2010, the same time similar laws take effect in several other states.

But it's not easy to get sparkling dishes when you go green.

Many people were shocked to find that products such as Seventh Generation, Ecover and Trader Joe's left their dishes encrusted with food, smeared with grease and too gross to use without rewashing them by hand. The culprit was hard water, which is mineral-rich and resistant to soap.

As a result, there has been a quiet rush of Spokane-area shoppers heading east on Interstate 90 into Idaho in search of old-school suds.

Real estate agent Patti Marcotte of Spokane stocks up on detergent at a Costco in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and doesn't care who knows it.

"Yes, I am a smuggler," she said. "I'm taking my chances because dirty dishes I cannot live with."

(In truth, the ban applies to the sale of phosphate detergent — not its use or possession — so Marcotte is not in any legal trouble.)

Supporters of the ban acknowledge it is not very popular.

"I'm not hearing a lot of positive feedback," conceded Shannon Brattebo of the Washington Lake Protection Association, a prime mover of the ban. "I think people are driving to Idaho." - AP

# Saving the planet one dinner roll at a time

## Entrepreneur saves conference table scraps, decorations from trash

It's a shame to waste perfectly good leftover food and supplies from conferences and celebrations. But how can all those extra chicken piccatas, brownies, centerpiece candles and floral arrangements get reused and recycled?

The Special E, suggests Deborah Popely, president of Green Events Source.

When mentioning this new eco-entrepreneur at a recent Destinations Showcase conference in Washington, D.C., she tapped into a collective green sentiment. Scores of meeting planners in attendance excitedly jotted down the contact information.

As the recession takes its toll, need grows for ventures that benefit people with the environment. Robert Kalt started Special E in East Brunswick, N.J., last year, and now has waste "Rescue Squads" in 30 major cities across the nation, including Washington, Dallas and San Francisco. "E" stands for "eco," "Earth" and "events" — the venture serves business meetings, receptions, trade shows, fundraising galas, weddings and other functions.

Among rescued surplus: food, food scraps, tableware, flowers, centerpieces, decorations, party favors and promotional products — many big-ticket and useful items, Kalt says. "We redirect these items to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, missions, nursing homes, hospitals, recycling centers, compost facilities, and charities and relief agencies across the country."

How it works: The event's planner calls or e-mails in advance of the event. Special E identifies organizations that will receive the surplus, then coordinates pickup and delivery arrangements. The facility hosting the event is also alerted.

"Rescue fees" average \$1 to \$3 per event attendee, with a minimum of \$375, Kalt says. "Companies can write off our 'rescue fee' as a tax-deductible business expense."

Individuals may be able to do the same. And all donors are free from any liability.

The Gap and Old Navy are among San Francisco companies that recently called on Special E.

"Since these were multi-day conferences, we were able to rescue hundreds of pounds of food from breakfast through dinner, which we then redirected to soup kitchens, missions and homeless shelters," Kalt said. "We were able to provide enough food to feed over 1,000 people who were hungry and homeless."

Additionally, Special E plants a

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tree for every 25 guests that attend an event. Locations include the Tahoe National Forest in northern California.

The business recently expanded with Arts-E, a worldwide network of artisans who craft practical and decorative items from soda can pull tabs, bottle caps, wine bottle glass and corks, food wrappers, bubble wrap, aluminum foil, discarded utensils, plastic badges, toothpicks, balloon scraps, and other event waste. Profits from the creations go to nonprofits that help the environment and impoverished people.

The Special E Web site features a real-time counter estimating the pounds of food wasted.

No wonder Kalt's phone keeps ringing.

*Robin Tierney is a freelancer who writes about health and environment issues. Reach her at robin\_tierney@gmail.com.*

**Green tip:** Ask about flextime at work. Working four 10-hour days will cut fuel consumption on your commutes by 20 percent. - "The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference" (Alpha Books, \$14.95).

