Blue Planet Prize

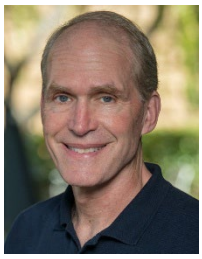
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2025

BLUE PLANET PRIZE 2025:
ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRIZE LAUREATES

This year marks the 34th awarding of the Blue Planet Prize, the international environmental award sponsored by the Asahi Glass Foundation, chaired by Takuya Shimamura. Every year, the Foundation selects two laureates, individuals, or organizations who have made significant contributions to the resolution of global environmental problems. The Board of Directors has selected the following 2025 Blue Planet Prize laureates.

1. **Professor Robert B. Jackson (USA)** Born on September 26, 1961

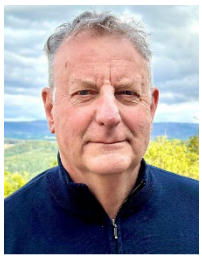
Department of Earth System Science, Stanford University



Professor Robert B. Jackson is an expert on the carbon cycle in terrestrial ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, and wetlands. He has conducted pioneering research on the relationship between soil, vegetation, and soil bacterial communities. In addition, he has quantified the balance of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, from natural ecosystems and from fossil fuel use. Since 2017, he has served as chair of the Global Carbon Project (GCP), leading efforts to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2. **Dr. Jeremy Leggett (UK)** Born on March 16, 1954

Founder and CEO of Highlands Rewilding Ltd.
Inaugural chairman of the Carbon Tracker Initiative



Dr. Jeremy Leggett, as the inaugural chairman of the Carbon Tracker Initiative (CTI), introduced the concept of the "carbon bubble," highlighting the economic risks associated with fossil fuel assets. Through CTI's activities, he influenced investors and policymakers, advancing the divestment movement. In addition, as a practical effort to balance economic activity with environmental conservation, he founded one of the UK's leading solar energy companies. More recently, he has been spearheading initiatives in Scotland to connect ecological restoration with community prosperity.

- Each laureate is presented with a certificate of merit, a commemorative trophy, and 500,000 US dollars in prize money.
- The Award Ceremony is scheduled on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at Tokyo Kaikan. Commemorative lectures will be given on October 30th and November 1st, 2025, at the University of Tokyo and at the Kyoto International Community House (kokoka), respectively.
- This press release and the photo of each laureate will be published at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 11 (JST) on the website of the Asahi Glass Foundation (www.af-info.or.jp/en).

THE ASAHI GLASS FOUNDATION
2nd Floor, Science Plaza, 5-3 Yonbancho Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0081 Japan
Tel +81-3-5275-0620 Fax +81-3-5275-0871
E-mail: post@af-info.or.jp URL: https://www.af-info.or.jp

Statements from the Award Laureates upon Notification of Selection

Professor Robert B. Jackson

One of master poet Matsuo Bashō's many haiku can be translated as:

No one travels
Along this way but I,
This autumn evening.

Unlike poets, no scientist travels alone. I thank my family, friends, lab members, and colleagues in the Global Carbon Project who've supported me while working to make the world a better place. I thank GCP executive director, Josep Canadell, who I met long ago in the Stanford lab of Hal Mooney, a Blue Planet winner in 2002. And, of course, I thank the Asahi Glass Foundation for sustaining work in the environment.

It's easy to forget how much healthier we are because of past environmental champions. We in the United States have seen lead levels drop by 96% in the blood of our children after phasing out leaded gasoline. The U.S. Clean Air Act saves hundreds of thousands of lives a year at a 30-fold return on investment. International cooperation forged the Montreal Protocol that protects the world's ozone shield and all life on earth. Like freedom and equality, though, environmental progress and a safe climate are at risk. The Blue Planet Prize is my reminder, and I am grateful for it.

Dr. Jeremy Leggett

I am delighted and humbled by this honour, the more so because of my long association with Japan. As an academic earth scientist in the 1980s I worked closely with researchers in Japanese universities and industry.

As a climate campaigner in the 1990s I worked with Japanese and other international colleagues towards the success we all eventually enjoyed at the Kyoto climate summit in 1997. As a solar entrepreneur thereafter I learned much in the early years of the solar revolution from Japanese, American and German pioneers. I am deeply grateful to all these colleagues, and the teams and alumni at Solarcentury, SolarAid, Carbon Tracker and Highlands Rewilding. Also to my wife, Aki, a Japanese former climate analyst and UN official. I could not have won this award without them, and the deep honour of it is as much theirs as mine.

I resolve to use the platform the award provides to accelerate efforts to help craft a liveable future.

Report on the Selection Process (Blue Planet Prize 2025)

Nomination forms were sent to 408 nominators in Japan and 828 overseas. By the deadline, we had received a total of 146 nominations. The top three fields represented by the candidates, in order of number, were: ecology (35); atmospheric and earth sciences (30); and environmental economics and policymaking (23). The candidates represented 39 countries.

After each Selection Committee member individually evaluated the 146 candidates, the committee convened to narrow down the field. The Presentation Committee then reviewed the results of their deliberations. Finally, the Board of Directors formally decided to award the Prize to Professor Robert B. Jackson and Dr. Jeremy Leggett.

Laureates (1992-2024)

1992	Syukuro Manabe (USA) International Institute for Environment and Development (UK)
1993	Charles D. Keeling (USA) IUCN—The World Conservation Union (headquartered in Switzerland)
1994	Eugen Seibold (Germany) Lester R. Brown (USA)
1995	Bert Bolin (Sweden) Maurice F. Strong (Canada)
1996	Wallace S. Broecker (USA) The M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (India)
1997	James E. Lovelock (UK) Conservation International (head-quartered in the USA)
1998	Mikhail I. Budyko (Russia) David R. Brower (USA)
1999	Paul R. Ehrlich (USA) Qu Geping (China)
2000	Theo Colborn (USA) Karl-Henrik Robèrt (Sweden)
2001	Robert May (Australia) Norman Myers (UK)
2002	Harold A. Mooney (USA) J. Gustave Speth (USA)
2003	Gene E. Likens (USA) and F. Herbert Bormann (USA) Vo Quy (Vietnam)
2004	Susan Solomon (USA) Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway)
2005	Nicholas Shackleton (UK) Gordon Hisashi Sato (USA)
2006	Akira Miyawaki (Japan) Emil Salim (Indonesia)
2007	Joseph L. Sax (USA) Amory B. Lovins (USA)
2008	Claude Lorius (France) José Goldemberg (Brazil)
2009	Hirofumi Uzawa (Japan) Nicholas Stern (UK)
2010	James Hansen (USA) Robert Watson (UK)
2011	Jane Lubchenco (USA) Barefoot College (India)
2012	William E. Rees (Canada) and Mathis Wackernagel (Switzerland) Thomas E. Lovejoy (USA)
2013	Taroh Matsuno (Japan) Daniel Sperling (USA)
2014	Herman Daly (USA) Daniel H. Janzen (USA) and Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio)
2015	Partha Dasgupta (UK) Jeffrey D. Sachs (USA)
2016	Pavan Sukhdev (India) Markus Borner (Switzerland)
2017	Hans J. Schellnhuber (Germany) Gretchen C. Daily (USA)
2018	Brian Walker (Australia) Malin Falkenmark (Sweden)
2019	Eric Lambin (Belgium) Jared Diamond (USA)
2020	David Tilman (USA) Simon Stuart (UK)
2021	Veerabhadran Ramanathan (USA) Mohan Munasinghe (Sri Lanka)
2022	Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan Stephen Carpenter (USA)
2023	Richard Thompson (UK), Tamara Galloway (UK), and Penelope Lindeque (UK) Debarati Guha-Sapir (Belgium)
2024	Robert Costanza (USA & Australia) Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Germany)

For more information, please contact: Toshihiro Tanuma, PhD

THE ASAHI GLASS FOUNDATION
2nd Floor, Science Plaza, 5-3 Yonbancho Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo 102-0081 Japan
e-mail: post@af-info.or.jp, URL: https://www.af-info.or.jp

Supplementary Information
Profiles of the 2025 Blue Planet Prize Laureates

Professor Robert B. Jackson

Major research achievements and activities

Professor Robert B. Jackson is an expert on the carbon cycle[1] in terrestrial ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, and wetlands. He has quantified the balance of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, in natural ecosystems, while also demonstrating the previously underestimated importance of anthropogenic emissions. Furthermore, as a climate change mitigation strategy, he advocates for "atmospheric restoration" through methane reduction.

In the field of fundamental ecological science, Professor Jackson has conducted groundbreaking research on plant roots and soil bacterial communities[2]. In particular, he has investigated the role of soil nutrients and soil bacterial communities as constraints on carbon dioxide absorption (photosynthetic production) by forests under elevated atmospheric CO_2 concentrations, yielding significant findings such as how these factors influence carbon accumulation in the soil. For example, while elevated atmospheric CO_2 levels enhance carbon dioxide absorption through plant photosynthesis, leading to increased plant biomass[3], plants also release easily degradable organic compounds from their roots to soil microbes to acquire essential nutrients for growth. Consequently, soil respiration intensifies, which, in turn, reduces soil organic carbon stocks[4].

According to the 2024 Global Methane Budget, atmospheric methane concentrations have increased by a factor of 2.6 compared to the pre-industrial level, with at least two-thirds of global methane emissions now originating from human activities. In particular, emissions from agriculture and waste—including rice paddies, ruminants, and landfills—are nearly twice as high as those from fossil fuel sources. Professor Jackson has also raised concerns about methane leaks from human activities, such as oil and gas extraction, and from city pipelines, homes, and buildings. These activities, along with his research on methane budgets in the tropical wetlands of the Amazon, enhance our understanding of the global methane budget. This knowledge plays a crucial role in developing strategies to reduce methane emissions and formulate climate change mitigation policies.

Professor Jackson has served as Chair of the Global Carbon Project (GCP)[5] since 2017, dedicating himself to monitoring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The GCP is an international initiative that tracks global greenhouse gas emissions from natural and human systems and collaborates with more than 1,000 scientists to provide scientific data to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and national governments. Additionally, the GCP measures the global budget[6] for carbon dioxide and provides additional global budgets for methane and nitrous oxide[7], the two most impactful greenhouse gases after carbon dioxide.

Professor Jackson is one of the most highly cited scientists in the fields of ecology, environmental science, and climate change. He is also committed to writing for a general audience, and his book *Into the Clear Blue Sky* (2024, Scribner and Penguin Random House) was selected by *The Times* as one of the "Top Science Books of 2024." His other works include *The Earth Remains Forever* (University of Texas Press) and the children's poetry books *Animal Mischief* and *Weekend Mischief* (Highlights Magazine and Boyds Mills Press). In addition, he is an accomplished poet and photographer, with his work featured in numerous media outlets, including *USA Today* and *The New York Times*.

Academic and Career Background

2014-present	Douglas Provostial Professor, School of Earth Sciences, Stanford University
2007-2013	Nicholas Chair of Global Environmental Change, Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University
2005-present	Director, National Institute for Climate Change Research, DOE, southeast region
2003-2013	Professor, Department of Biology and Nicholas School of the Environment & Earth Sciences, Duke University
2001-2002	Associate Professor, Department of Biology and Nicholas School of the Environment & Earth Sciences, Duke University
1999-2000	Assistant Professor, Department of Biology and Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University
1995-1998	Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, UT Austin
1993-1994	Department of Energy Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellow for Global Change, Stanford University
1992	Utah State University, Ph.D. Ecology and Environment
1992	Utah State University, M.S. Statistics
1990	Utah State University, M.S. Ecology and Environment
1983	Rice University, B.S. Chemical Engineering

Notes:

1. Carbon Cycle

The carbon cycle refers to the process by which carbon moves and is exchanged in various forms with the Earth's atmosphere, biosphere, oceans, and geosphere. Plants absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and fix it as organic matter. Organic carbon, taken up by organisms through the food chain, is eventually converted back into carbon dioxide through respiration and decomposition, returning it to the atmosphere. In the oceans, carbon dioxide dissolves into seawater and is transported into the deep sea, whereas phytoplankton fix carbon through photosynthesis and, after passing through the food chain, sink as organic carbon into the deep ocean. In natural ecosystems, the absorption and release of carbon were originally in balance. However, since the Industrial Revolution, the massive consumption of fossil fuels and the conversion of forests and other natural ecosystems into farmland have increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, becoming a major driver of global warming.

2. Soil Bacterial Community

The soil bacterial community refers to the diverse assemblage of bacteria inhabiting the soil. These bacteria play a crucial role in maintaining soil health and ecosystem stability through processes such as organic matter decomposition, nitrogen fixation, and pathogen suppression. The composition of soil bacterial communities varies significantly depending on factors such as soil type, climate, vegetation, and agricultural management; they exhibit exceptionally high diversity. Additionally, soil bacterial communities have a substantial impact on the exchange of greenhouse gases between the soil and the atmosphere by releasing carbon dioxide through respiration, producing nitrous oxide as part of the nitrogen cycle, and influencing methane balance.

3. Plant Biomass

Plant biomass refers to organic matter derived from plants. It is formed by the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and includes materials such as wood, crops, grass, and algae. Plant biomass can be used as a fuel or a resource, serving as a raw material for renewable energy and bioplastics.

4. Soil Organic Carbon Stocks

Soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks refer to the amount of carbon derived from organic matter that accumulates in the soil. It plays a crucial role in mitigating climate change and enhancing soil fertility. SOC includes carbon contained within soil microorganisms, carbon that is rapidly decomposed by microbial activity, and carbon that resists decomposition and remains stored in the soil for extended periods. The amount of SOC is influenced by factors such as climate conditions, soil type, vegetation, and land use, with excessive tillage being a major cause of SOC depletion. Measures to increase SOC include no-till farming, the use of cover crops, organic matter application, and forest regeneration. Proper SOC management not only promotes sustainable agriculture but also contributes to environmental conservation by sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

5. Global Carbon Project (GCP)

The Global Carbon Project (GCP) is a global research project that studies greenhouse gases in relation to human activities and the Earth system. Established in 2001, the GCP publishes the annual Global Carbon Budget, providing global data on carbon sources and sinks. In addition to carbon dioxide, the GCP compiles global analyses of other greenhouse gases, such as methane, and collects, analyzes, and publishes various data related to the carbon cycle. Furthermore, the GCP plays a crucial role in developing science-based strategies to address climate change by assessing countries' progress toward meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

6. Global Budget

The global budget for greenhouse gases refers to the balance between their emissions and absorptions across the entire Earth. Major greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, which are emitted through the burning of fossil fuels, agricultural activities such as rice cultivation, and natural sources like wetlands. On the other hand, forests and oceans play a role in absorbing greenhouse gases through processes such as photosynthesis, respiration, and dissolution, influencing the net balance of emissions. When emissions exceed absorption, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rises, accelerating global warming. Understanding this balance is crucial for setting emission reduction targets and informing policy decisions, and measures are being advanced through international monitoring and reporting.

7. Methane and Nitrous Oxide

Methane (CH_4) and nitrous oxide (N_2O, also known as dinitrogen monoxide) are the most significant greenhouse gases, next to carbon dioxide (CO_2). Methane has a 100-year global warming potential (GWP100) approximately 27 times that of CO_2, with a relatively short atmospheric lifetime of about 12 years. Thus, reducing methane emissions can have a rapid impact on slowing global warming. Major sources of methane include wetlands, livestock (enteric fermentation), fossil fuel extraction and transportation, rice paddies, and landfill waste. In contrast, nitrous oxide has a GWP100 approximately 273 times that of CO_2 and a long atmospheric lifetime of about 109 years. The primary sources of N_2O emissions include agriculture (particularly the use of nitrogen fertilizers), industrial processes, and fossil fuel combustion. Additionally, N_2O contributes to ozone layer depletion. Reducing emissions of these greenhouse gases is essential for both short-term and long-term climate change mitigation.

Supplementary Information
Profiles of the 2025 Blue Planet Prize Laureates

Dr. Jeremy Leggett (UK)

Major activities

Dr. Jeremy Leggett is a British social entrepreneur and author working in the fields of renewable energy and climate change. He has been described by the UK newspaper The Observer as "Britain's most respected green energy boss."

After earning a doctorate in earth science from the University of Oxford, Dr. Leggett worked as a geologist at Imperial College, where his research included studies of shale deposits funded by major oil companies. However, driven by growing concerns about global warming, he resigned from his academic position and began working to address climate issues. From 1989 to 1996, he served as a climate campaigner with Greenpeace International, an environmental NGO. In 1997, in an endeavour to reconcile economic activity with environmental protection, he founded Solarcentury[1]. Under Dr. Leggett's leadership as a board member until 2020, the company grew into one of the most successful solar energy companies in the world. Solarcentury donated 5% of its annual profits to SolarAid[2], an international charity he established. From 2006 to 2020, he served as chair of SolarAid, supporting efforts to distribute solar lights in rural Africa, with donations reaching nearly £1 million by 2020.

In 2010, Dr. Leggett became the inaugural chair of the Carbon Tracker Initiative (CTI)[3], a nonprofit think tank founded by former UK fund manager Mark Campanale with the aim of aligning financial and capital market actions with climate science. The CTI introduced the concept of the "carbon bubble[4]," highlighting the economic risks associated with fossil fuel assets held by companies, which were seen as overvalued in light of anticipated future restrictions on fossil fuel use due to climate action. This work influenced decision-making among investors and policymakers, contributing to the fossil fuel divestment movement that began around 2011, particularly among US university endowments, and expanded rapidly after 2014. Fund managers increasingly relied on CTI's analytical data when considering divestment[5], ultimately leading to a decline in the asset value of the fossil fuel extraction industry.

After achieving success in renewable energy through Solarcentury and establishing CTI's operations, Dr. Leggett stepped down as chair of CTI and founded Highland Rewilding in 2021. This private limited company owns and manages various landscapes in Scotland, including cattle pastures, native forests, peat bogs, moorlands, and the Loch Ness shoreline. It promotes activities that link ecological restoration with community prosperity through large-scale rewilding[6], encompassing the restoration of natural landscapes, exploration of regenerative agriculture, and collaboration with local communities.

Dr. Leggett was an Associate Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University (1997-2015) and served on UK government advisory bodies including the Renewables Advisory Board (2002-2006). In addition, he has published five solo books on climate change and renewable energy for the general public, including The Carbon War (1999), The Energy of Nations (2013), and The Winning of The Carbon War (2015). He remains actively engaged in raising awareness about climate change.

Academic and Career Background

2019-Present	Founder and CEO of Highlands Rewilding Ltd., a start-up sequestering carbon, growing biodiversity and accelerating the rural green new deal on Scottish estates
2006-2020	Chair of SolarAid, a charity funded with 5% of Solarcentury's annual profits

2002-2006	UK government advisor of the Renewables Advisory Board
1997-2020	Founder and Director of Solarcentury, an international solar solutions company
1997-2015	Associate Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University
1989-1996	Climate Campaigner at Greenpeace International
1978-1989	Lecturer, Imperial College of Science and Technology
1978	Earth Science, Oxford University, D.Phil.
1975	University of Wales, BSc
1972	Hastings College

Notes

1. Solarcentury

Founded in 1997 by Jeremy Leggett, Solarcentury became the largest solar energy company in the UK. Its annual revenue reached £168 million in 2015–16. While the company initially focused on the UK market, it shifted its emphasis to Europe and Latin America from 2017 onward. Solarcentury donated 5% of its annual profits to SolarAid, an international charity that supports solar-lighting entrepreneurs in Africa. In November 2020, Solarcentury was acquired and integrated into the Norwegian renewable energy company Statkraft.

2. SolarAid

SolarAid is an international charity committed to creating a sustainable solar light market in Africa. In line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7), it works to reduce global poverty and combat climate change by providing access to solar lights for rural communities. SolarAid owns SunnyMoney, which was the largest seller of solar lights in Africa in 2014, and catalyzed the first two fast-growth African solar markets, in Kenya and Tanzania. It operates today in Zambia and Malawi, with partnerships in Uganda and Senegal. Founded by the UK solar energy company Solarcentury in 2006, it received the Google Global Impact Award and the Ashden Gold Award in 2013.

3. Carbon Tracker Initiative

The Carbon Tracker Initiative is a London-based nonprofit think tank founded in 2010 by UK fund manager Mark Campanale. It researches the impact of climate change on financial markets and highlights the risks of the "carbon bubble" and "stranded assets." The organization warns of potential economic losses from excessive investment in fossil fuels and provides information to investors and financial regulators. Carbon Tracker also analyzes the investment risks and opportunities associated with the expansion of renewable energy and the transition to a low-carbon economy, aiming to establish sustainable capital markets.

4. Carbon Bubble

The carbon bubble refers to the overvaluation of fossil fuel-related assets resulting from progress in climate change mitigation efforts. While governments worldwide have set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, anticipating large-scale restriction on fossil fuel use in the future, financial markets continue to assess these assets using conventional valuation methods. As a result, an increasing number of fossil fuel-related assets are at risk of becoming stranded assets—resources that can no longer be utilized profitably because of climate policies. This could create ripple effects in financial markets, potentially triggering a financial crisis. Moreover, as the energy industry undergoes structural changes, the fossil fuel sector is expected to decline while the renewable energy sector expands, urging companies to take swift action. The carbon bubble highlights the deep interconnection between climate change and financial market stability.

5. Divestment

Divestment is the withdrawal of investments from certain assets for social or environmental reasons. Recently, there has been a significant emphasis on divesting from fossil fuel assets as a key strategy to combat global warming. This movement began with demands from university students in the United States and has since gained support from institutions such as Stanford University, Syracuse University, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. In 2015, the Norwegian government decided to withdraw coal asset investments from the world's largest sovereign wealth fund. The rise of divestment is driven not only by growing awareness of climate change but also by increasing recognition of the financial risks associated with fossil fuel investments. Investors' decisions are being affected by the declining costs of renewable energy and concerns about the "carbon bubble burst," which could lead to a sharp drop in fossil fuel asset values. Consequently, divestment is now regarded not merely as an ethical issue, but as a rational investment strategy.

6. Rewilding

Rewilding is a type of nature restoration that endeavors to return landscapes as closely as possible to the state they were in before human degradation of the environment. This is needed to accelerate carbon sequestration and to reverse global biodiversity collapse. Nature recovery techniques utilized by rewilders such as the team at Highlands Rewilding and the local community members working with them are many and varied. They include expansion of residual native woodland such as temperate rainforest, replacement of monoculture plantations with mixed native tree species, restoration of degraded peatlands via water retention, and regenerative agriculture such as adaptive grazing.