

Mountain Keeping Column for 4/12/07

## **Green Goes Mainstream**

**By Kristan Cockerill**

Several weeks ago I was thrilled to pull my copy of *Sports Illustrated* from the mailbox and to find an image of Florida Marlins player Dontrelle Willis standing thigh deep in water inside a stadium.

The cover story was titled “Sports and Global Warming: As the Planet Changes, So Do the Games We Play – Time to Pay Attention.”

The article covered the predicted effects from climate change on many different sports, from the number of ski days per year (not good), to the possible impacts on coastal stadiums (really not good), to the wood-chomping bugs that threaten ash trees, the preferred species for baseball bats.

Because I follow environmental issues closely, there wasn't anything surprising to me in the *SI* piece. But I kept reminding myself that I was reading *Sports Illustrated*, not *National Geographic* nor *National Wildlife*.

For me, this was a remarkable landmark. Environmental issues, specifically climate change, had hit the mainstream. When the editors at *Sports Illustrated* are confident that this problem is as relevant to their more than 3 million readers as swimsuit models, we've reached some kind of a milestone.

And *Sports Illustrated* isn't alone.

A March 27th article by Sarah Van Schagen in *Grist*, an on-line magazine, identified several popular magazines and their coverage of “green” issues. *Glamour* covered safe cosmetics and environmental clothing. *Town & Country* featured a sustainable home in Manhattan. *Domino* highlighted companies with ecological products. *Country Home* profiled organic farmers. (There are numerous other examples; see <http://www.grist.org/advice/books/2007/03/27/magazines/index.html>.)

This coverage is not without criticism. *Grist* readers, for example, have noted that if these magazines were serious about going green they'd use more recycled, less toxic paper and place a bit less emphasis on the consumer culture. Definitely good points.

But for me, getting the word out about ecological issues and how they are integral to our daily lives is crucial, and these mainstream magazines are contributing to this effort. They reach a much wider and more diverse audience than more focused, environmental publications. As we encounter environmental information in our regular routine, it will become “normal,” and ideally “thinking green” will be something we accept as part of being responsible citizens. I am going to pay more attention to the magazine covers in the grocery store to see what they are offering in their “green” coverage, and I encourage you to do the same!