

take action NOW!



Wolf Delisting and Bad Policy Could Open the...

author: National Parks...

signatures: 20,616

sign petition

powered by care2

NATURAL CHOICE
GET THE NATURAL TASTE
SMALL BREEDS PREFER ▶

©™ Trademarks © of the Nutro Company 2012.

- ALL
- DESIGN
- TECHNOLOGY
- LIVING
- TRANSPORTATION
- ENERGY
- SCIENCE
- BUSINESS
- PODCAS

10,000 Year, Subterranean Clock Will Transform Our View of Time and Technology



Sami Grover
Technology / Gadgets
March 14, 2012

RELATED



IS TIME OUR MOST PRECIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE?



THE FEAST: FULL ON GOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR THE LONG NOW



VIDEO OF FLOODED PARIS EVOKES THE THREAT OF RISING SEAS



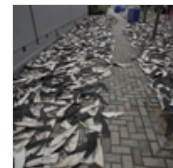
© The Long Now Foundation

Petz briefly [mentioned the Long Now Foundation](#) before, outlining their mission to shift our cultural focus on time and to ask big questions about what real long-term thinking might look like. The way they are doing this is as unique as it is ambitious.

A Massive Clock Buried Deep in a Mountain

While half listening to [The Story on NPR](#) the other day, I started to hear the voice of Alexander Rose of [the Long Now Foundation](#) as he explained how he and his team are building a clock that is designed to last for 10,000 years; running entirely on mechanical energy; and measure those years not in hours and minutes, but in truly civilization-scale units of time. (The choice of 10,000 years as an appropriate time span is based on the notion that civilization is currently about 10,000 years old.)

MOST POPULAR



1000s of S Found in H

This video of s on the sidewalk reality.

by Jerry James Stone in Enda

Warehouse Repurposed Into Amazing Office

This office remodel has some great ideas for living small at home, too.

by Paula Alvarado in Interior I



Why Presic Control Ga

This 2008 Fox how the Presic prices.

by Brian Merchant in Fossil F

When is a car comp than just a car cor

When they dec to build a shi

find out more

INNOVATION FOR

Slowly, my mind came into focus and realized what I was hearing, and I was profoundly moved by its potential.

SAVE \$1,000 ON SOLAR POWER
 Coupon Expires 3/31
 Redeem Coupon ▶
 SolarCity



© [The Long Now Foundation](#)

Engineered to Last. Designed to Provoke.

Located deep in a mountain in West Texas, [The Long Now Foundation's 10,000 Year Clock](#) is being built right now. Engineered from marine grade 316 stainless steel, titanium and dry running ceramic ball bearings, the clocks mechanisms are designed to physically last 10,000 years in the cool, dry conditions under the mountain. But physical longevity is just one element of the thought that is going in to creating this extraordinary time piece:

There is a Clock ringing deep inside a mountain. It is a huge Clock, hundreds of feet tall, designed to tick for 10,000 years. Every once in a while the bells of this buried Clock play a melody. Each time the chimes ring, it's a melody the Clock has never played before. The Clock's chimes have been programmed to not repeat themselves for 10,000 years. Most times the Clock rings when a visitor has wound it, but the Clock hoards energy from a different source and occasionally it will ring itself when no one is around to hear it. It's anyone's guess how many beautiful songs will never be heard over the Clock's 10 millennial lifespan.



© [The Long Now Foundation](#)

Powered By Mechanical Solar Energy

The clock's mechanics are powered by a combination of solar energy, harvested from the temperature differentials between night and day, and kinetic energy harvested from the clock's visitors—this is an example of renewable energy at work. But it is not the energy component that makes this such an important project for us Treehugger's, but rather the potential for creating cultural shift and a genuine interest in the well-being of future generations:



FEATURED



Best of Green Choice: Living

Vote now in our awards to decide

by Mairi Beautyman in Culture

13 Awesome Green iPad Apps

Put the iPad to use for good with these helpful green apps.

by Alex Davies in Gadgets



5 Best Portable Laptop Chargers

Take your laptop off the grid with these chargers.

by Jaymi Heimbuch in Solar

10 Transformer Home Offices

These home office setups practically disappear when your work is done.

by Lloyd Alter in Interior Design

Why would anyone build a Clock inside a mountain with the hope that it will ring for 10,000 years? Part of the answer: just so people will ask this question, and having asked it, prompt themselves to conjure with notions of generations and millennia. If you have a Clock ticking for 10,000 years what kinds of generational-scale questions and projects will it suggest? If a Clock can keep going for ten millennia, shouldn't we make sure our civilization does as well? If the Clock keeps going after we are personally long dead, why not attempt other projects that require future generations to finish? The larger question is, as virologist Jonas Salk once asked, "Are we being good ancestors?"



© [The Long Now Foundation](#)

Technology Always Changes Us

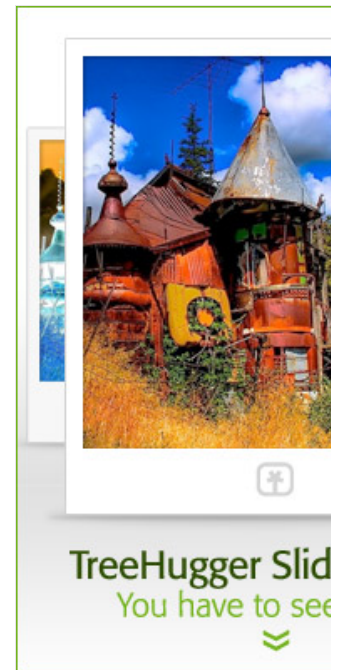
As anyone who spends time thinking about technology knows, what we invent inevitably shapes how we see the world around us. We obliterate time and distance with cars and fossil fuels. We transform our notion of intellectual and creative property rights with turntables, mixers and the invention of the iPod. And we are in the process of transforming how we think about energy and ownership [as distributed renewables become commonplace](#).

A Mythic Undertaking

But usually it is the technology that comes first, targeted primarily at solving a particular problem or challenge. The cultural shifts that occur as a result don't always become apparent until long after the technology is already in use. This clock, however, takes a different path—embracing the inherent challenge to the status quo that a philosophical and engineering feat like this represents, not as a by-product of innovation, but a direct motivator of it. Even the clock's location, which will require a day's hike to reach, creates a sense of the mythic. This is not about utility or creating a new tourist attraction, it is about making a mark on the fabric of time itself—and then pausing to examine that fabric in a little more detail.

I've argued before that [time may be our most precious environmental resource](#). This clock may help us value it.

Tags: [Activism](#) | [Renewable Energy](#) | [Texas](#) | [United States](#)



7

Like



RSS for Sami

Like

Add New Comment

[Login](#)



Showing 0 comments

Sort by best rating

[Subscribe by email](#) [RSS](#)

Trackback URL

Our sites

- Animal Planet
- Discovery Channel
- Discovery Health
- Discovery Kids
- Discovery Fit & Health
- HD Theater
- Investigation Discovery
- Military Channel
- Oprah Winfrey Network
- Parentables
- Planet Green
- Science Channel
- TLC
- Turbo

Video

Discovery Channel Video

Mobile

iPhone App

Shop

- Discovery Store
- DVDs & Books
- Custom Gear
- Gift Sets
- Sale
- Discovery Adventures
- Student Adventures
- Discovery TSX
- Discovery Corporate Sales

Stay connected

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Email Newsletters
- RSS
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Jobs

Corporate

- Discovery Comr
- Careers @ Disc
- Privacy Policy
- Visitor Agreemer