From Scott Nelson, Treasurer of New Earth Archive:

As for the process of selecting the books, we wrote a description of our goals and the steps we went through to come up with the top 25 books below:

We think it’s up to current generations of students to ensure the impacts that we and future generations have on the world are solely for the good of human progress. To do that we have to see for ourselves how we fit into the complex systems we’re a part of: we need to become full-spectrum students, capable of innovation and constant, critical thinking. An ecological education for an earth citizen would involve understanding the basic principles of ecosystems; of carrying capacity and ecological economics; of thermodynamics, in terms of matter and energy flow; of basic psychology, and flaws in the decision-making process; origins of morality and ethics; of appropriate technology, and its impacts on human nature; and most importantly, would encourage students to never stop asking questions.

This is the framework with which we began the concept of the New Earth Archive. To mobilize college students against the issues we see today, education needs to provide a more streamlined way for us to identify the things that really matter, and which influence us to drive change. Just as importantly, we need to provide a means for us to understand this information within its greater global context.

We received help from David Rothenberg and Maurie Cohen of the STS Department in connecting us with Garrison Institute’s Climate, Mind Behavior mailing list, Jonathan Rose Companies, Andrew Revkin NYTimes blog, and many others to obtain an initial list of books.

We went to the experts and authorities in all these areas with this idea, and asked for books that could actually reach and impact students. From their initial overwhelming response came 400 suggestions. The goal then, of the New Earth Archive, was to identify a small number of books and materials with the greatest chance of educating students about the topics mentioned before.

It took 5 months, but the first New Earth Archive Booklist has been established. From over 140 voters, and over 1300 individual votes cast, 25 books rose to the top as the ones that authors, journalists, professors, researchers, and some of the most influential environmentalists of today decided would have a positive impact on students.

It’s not perfect. The nature of this project is that as NJIT begins to adopt this concept, and students begin to read these books, we’ll continue to add new books to the archive and track things like ratings and comments, and get a sense of which ones truly begin to have an impact on readers. Books that students find ineffective will be removed, while new ones will continue to replace them, the best of them rising higher to the top of the list. From the archive that we see next December, we’ll take the top 100, and hold a new vote for the 2nd New Earth Archive Booklist – and this time, students will have had a direct say in the process.