

5 Sources of Alternative Energy You May Not Have Heard Of

February 4 2010, by Miranda Marquit



Could the mining moon provide a source of energy for Earth?

(PhysOrg.com) -- As fossil fuels increasingly fall out of favor, many are looking into alternative energy sources to help us power our lives with a smaller impact on the environment. You already know about solar power and wind energy, and hydro-electric power and nuclear power have been around for decades. But scientists are increasingly looking to the natural world for additional solutions.

Here are 5 alternative energy sources that you may hearing more of soon:

- **Helioculture:** The idea is to create hydrocarbons with a little help from the sun. Brackish water is combined with photosynthetic

organisms, nutrients and carbon dioxide and left in the sun. This process results in hydrocarbons that are ready for use a fuel -- not refining necessary.

- **Sewage:** Our waste can...reduce waste. Using microbial fuel cells, sewage can be used in bio-electrochemical systems to create power. In fact, Norway has plans to begin using human waste to power the buses in Oslo.

- **Evaporation:** Apparently, scientists are working on ways to harness the difference in electrical properties that exist between air and water. In order to make this work, a special kind of "leaf" is micro-fabricated. Air bubbles are pumped in, and as the water evaporates, the power is captured. Although it does seem like a lot of work for what might not be too much power...

- **Human movement:** Could the expanding planetary population actually power itself through movement? There are thoughts that piezoelectricity could be generated with the use of special tiles placed in strategic places where people walk. These tiles would be made out of materials that generate energy in response to mechanical stress applied on them. As people walked to the bus, or jogged in the park, their pressure on these tiles could produce power.

- **Moon:** For some time, scientists have considered ways to produce Helium-3, which is a non-radioactive possibility for mostly [clean energy](#). However, creating He-3 on earth is a real pain. However, our near neighbor, the moon, has this light isotope in abundance. Could we see mines on the moon, working to tap into this source of possible energy? Maybe. One Russian company, RKK Energiya, thinks that moon mining for Helium-3 could be a possibility by 2020.

It is clear that we do need to start using our innovation to look for

alternative sources of energy. It will be interesting to see which (if any) of these [alternative energy sources](#) actually become viable.

More information: Mother Nature Network: [www.mnn.com/earth-matters/ener ... -never-heard-3#image](http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/energy/alternative-energy/never-heard-3#image)

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