

## Day 12: Invest in green and socially just enterprises.

"Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart." This bit of ancient wisdom is very relevant today. Many of us have retirement funds and other investments. I have 4% of my pay deducted for a retirement fund and my employer matches that with 5%, so 9% of my income goes into a retirement fund. I can choose among several different mutual funds to invest this money.

Not a single one of these funds has anything to do with the local economy or does any social or environmental screening of the companies invested in.

The problem isn't a lack of choices for the managers of the retirement fund offered at my work. According to <http://www.bloggingstocks.com/2006/09/05/socially-responsible-investing-a-primer/> (Or <http://tinyurl.com/kjlm1> ) there are 221 mutual funds that can be described as "socially responsible", managing \$229 trillion in assets, this is about 10% of all investment funds.

All SRI funds have some kind of screening process and criteria. The Social Investment Forum website has a page which compares the screening criteria of its member funds in these areas: alcohol, tobacco, gambling, weapons, animal testing, products/services, environment, human rights, labor relations, employment/equality, community investment. <http://www.socialinvest.org/Areas/SRIGuide/mfsc.cfm>

One aspect of socially responsible investing is providing venture capital to new enterprises with innovative ideas and products that meet environmental and/or social justice needs.

Returns on socially responsible investments are competitive with returns of regular mutual funds.

Advocates of SRI sometimes speak of the "triple bottom line" - investment to achieve returns in social justice, finances, and environmental care.

As with any investment, research is essential, and the Internet provides a lot of tools. Taking personal responsibility for our choices, including our financial and investment selections, is a critical aspect of the journey towards sustainability.

More info resources:

<http://www.socialinvest.org/Areas/SRIGuide/> Start here. "Introduction to Socially Responsible Investing", from the Social Investment Forum, a non-profit membership organization promoting socially responsible investment.

<http://www.csrwire.com/> , the "Corporate Social Responsibility" newswire

<http://www.business-ethics.com/network.htm> Corporate social responsibility report

<http://www.investorscircle.net/index.php> "Patient capital for a sustainable future"

<http://www.ecosustainable.com.au/links.htm> Lots of SRI links

For more information check out:

[www.bettertimesinfo.org](http://www.bettertimesinfo.org)

[www.energyconservationinfo.org](http://www.energyconservationinfo.org)