

# **Mission 2015 : Whole Earth Triage: securing the future**



**Biodiversity.** Are we really on the brink of a great extinction like the so called Big Five mass extinctions that occurred in the last 500 million years? Extinction has occurred throughout the history of life, and episodically, large fractions of biodiversity have disappeared. We are now able to crudely inventory earth's biodiversity and it is clear that over the past few hundred years, human activities are often the cause of extinction, but not always. At the same time we have become keenly aware of the fragility of many of our ecosystems and human impact on them. We as a species need a plan for the future. We can't and probably shouldn't try to save all species and ecosystems. Is saving the Blue whale more important than the rain forests or deep marine microbial ecosystems? Is minimizing global warming by limiting greenhouse gas emissions central to any plan forward? How do we decide? In other words what can we afford to do, what is the price of inaction, and how do we choose? Should preserving the biodiversity of the planet be subject to cost-benefit analysis?

**Your mission ( Mission 2015) will focus on prioritizing the biggest issues facing our planet and how to develop scientific, social, and economic approaches to addressing them.**

# The Biodiversity Crisis

