Stored in the Fjords

Burying harmful carbon emissions at the bottom of the ocean isn't just a fantasy solution to climate change. Scientists have long known that oceans capture CO2 from the soil and plants that erode into the waters that feed them and that they can hold onto the greenhouse gas for millions of years.

Now research shows that fjords, because of their depth and sinewy shape, are especially adept at storing carbon: The glacier-carved waterways hoard 100 times more than the ocean's average.

Fjords' power to trap CO2 may assist in the Earth's transition into and out of ice ages, says chemical oceanographer Richard W. Smith. But their storage capacity is under threat from mining and logging, and he warns against man-made attempts to force more carbon burial. "I don't feel like we can do it better than nature's already doing it," he says. "We'd get in there and muck things up." —*Nina Strochlic*

RATING SNOWFLAKES FOR SAFETY

Every snowflake may be unique but some kinds cause more trouble—avalanches, treacherous roads, gnarly ski conditions—than others. Knowing what's coming down could improve road safety during winter storms. A high-speed camera developed by Tim Garrett and his colleagues at the University of Utah captures detailed images of snow crystals. "It's around the freezing point that you really want to know what's falling," says Garrett. "Our instrument is able to diagnose sleet, snow, or rain." No worries about the flake on the right: It hits the ground as light, fluffy snow. —*Rachel Hartigan Shea*

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