

Just Another Climate Myth: February 17, 2009 (The reality is far worse than is told by the alarmist media.)

The opinions expressed by fewer and fewer scientists these days, popularized by authors like George Will of the Washington Post on the 16^{th} are extraordinarily damaging to society's appropriate perception of climate change. These authors do not understand the scientists that they are quoting, they do not understand the big picture and, for many other reasons, they are dead wrong.

About that myth about how cold it was last winter? Maybe so, here and there, but weather is not climate. Remember when the scientists told us in the 1980s that it would take 20 or more years to tell if climate change was real and if it was caused by man? One cold winter does not a new climate make. Last year was the 8th warmest average year ever recorded on the planet. China had its heaviest snows in a century, yes, but by March all of the snow was gone and China had recorded its earliest ever recorded snowmelt.

About the myth that Arctic Sea ice is rebounding rapidly to near record levels? True (sort of) but get this: the minimum surface coverage of sea ice last year *almost* beat the previous 2007's extraordinary record of 23% less than anything ever seen, *and* the total volume of sea ice last year, because of the ultra-warm previous year and thinner ice last winter, set a minimum ice <u>volume</u> record that is less than anything ever seen.

The 8th warmest year ever recorded was done with a strong La Nina cooling the world down significantly as well as a minimum in the 22-year sunspot cycle. Remember, more sunspots mean a warmer sun. It makes a difference. Summer 2008 saw the fewest sunspots (there were zero sunspots for a seven month-long period during 2008) in the last eleven years, and the sunspot-free period was one of the longest in living memory.

It is very important to remember that the debate on whether global warming exists, and whether or not man has caused, has concluded. The reason these unfruitful discussions keep occurring is because there are a few out there who have political, social or economic reasons to continue with the negative propaganda. The scientists have spoken. Science is not something one believes in. Sure science changes now and then, new things are discovered. But the scientists have decided that the debate of the 20^{th} century about climate is a waste of time.

In the 21^{st} century, what must be understood is that climate change is far worse than we learned in the 20^{th} century. It must be understood that scientists are conservative; they make their living being right – correct, absolute. The maxim "publish or perish" is real. If a scientist is wrong, he or she loses

credibility. If they are wrong too many times, they lose their ability to publish and therefore they perish.

What is happening to our planet is actually worse than the alarmist media is portraying:

First – The media doesn't understand the science. It is not their fault. It is the most complicated science in the world, being made up of a combination of most of the major fields of science in existence all interacting with one another. Journalists cannot see the big picture because it is so vast and complicated. The scientific language is extremely difficult to interpret. Their interpretation is limited by their amount of knowledge on the topic. This is not a putdown of journalists; this is simply an acknowledgement of the vast complication of climate science and the language that is used to communicate climate science. This is a great example:

There was some seeming good climate news recently when an article was published in an academic journal about the CO2 fertilization effect and measured increased in carbon storage in tropical forests. The actual paper though, cautions against the possibility that the trees measured were in some sort of rebound from trauma (logging, drought, etc.) before the study began. The alarmist media did not pick up this fact.

The article also mentioned nothing about several very important recent issues concerning global forest changes. These things were about the global browning of our forests and the total carbon storage capacity of the northern forests vs. the tropical forests. The bottom line is that the northern forests cover more than 3 times as much land area as tropical forests and they contain more than twice as much carbon per unit area. The northern forests have seen a significant browning as drought, high temperatures, insect and disease have started to take their toll in a warming world. They have passed their point of enrichment by the CO2 fertilization effect - a point theorized, but not estimated as to when it would happen. The possible increase in carbon storage of tropical forests, because of the CO2 effect, is far offset by the decrease in carbon storage occurring across the northern forests due to negative impacts of warming.

Yet, the media only reports the increase in tropical forests carbon storage ability. There have been no articles on the massive browning of the more important northern forests, or the recent journal article about a decrease in the productivity of northern forests beyond the CO2 fertilization effect due to increased disease, insect infestation and stress caused by a warming world. Numerous articles have been published on these accounts, and where are the stories in the media? Where is the understanding of the big picture? Where is the accurate reporting of the science itself – from the original article, the part about the recovery from previous trauma?

NASA Satellites Reveal Browing Forests



The "Greenness Trend" (browning effect) shown is calculated per year. When the figure for \$994 - 2002 is considered the net browning effect is proceeding at about 10% per ten years. Does this mean in 50 years that half of our forests will be dead? It is important to understand that the greening seen in the images in the far north is mnostly tundra. The other important hting to understand is that there was a huge amount fo greeningthat took place in the previous decade from 1982 to 1992. This was the CO2 fertilization effect. The effect has passed in the northern forests however and drought, disease, insect infestation and heat stress have reversed the CO2 fertilization effect. Source: NASA Earth Observatory, Satellites Reveal A Browning Forest

http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/BorealThreshold/boreal_threshold2.php

Second – Scientists are not media friendly. Most scientists are similar to journalists only in reverse. Communicating complicated scientific information to anyone other than another scientist – in the same field - is difficult at best. The extremely specialized insight required to understand leading edge science today is again, difficult at best. It is like it all has to be translated into English before the average person can understand it. It's the communication medium that is responsible. Normal people (journalists included) are plenty intelligent enough to understand vastly complicated thoughts if those thoughts are written or delivered with an average persons vocabulary.

Third - Scientists are conservative by definition. What they write must be correct or they risk the loss of their publishing privilege. Their data must be 100% correct so they speak conservatively to avoid undue risk of being wrong. If they are wrong, the academic journals that normally publish their papers will be less likely to continue publishing their work. The more the scientist is wrong, the greater the chance that he or she will never be able to be published again.

Fourth – The models are conservative because of the conservative science. The models, especially since the turn of the 21^{st} century have been proven to be conservative. Even the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fourth Assessment, the fourth six year-long project by the largest scientific body ever assembled in peace time, has been acknowledged to be significantly conservative by many leading climate scientists. The fourth assessment was published just 14 months ago.

Fifth – It appears that climate sensitivity is less than was previously thought. This means that more changes can happen with less forcing. For example: more sea level rise is occurring with less warming, less CO2 is being absorbed by the oceans with less warming, greater sea ice melt is occurring at lower temperatures, more ice cap melt is occurring at lower temperatures, mankind is emitting more CO2 sooner than expected, More methane is being released from permafrost melt and undersea from methane deposits than expected, snowfall is melting earlier in the season, sooner than expected, warming because of earlier snowfall melt is occurring faster than expected, etc.

Sixth – It also appears that our climate has shifted into another phase of warming that is happening much faster than just a few years ago. Examples are: the fifty year average sea level rise is 1.2 to 1.5 mm per year; the 10 year average is 2.0 mm per year, the 2007 rate was 3.3 mm per year, and the rate is continuing to increase. Today's CO2 emission rate is greater than the worst-case scenario for CO2 emission at the end of the 21^{st} century used in the IPCC climate projection models in their latest assessment. The great southern ocean, which is a significant part of the CO2 absorption system on the planet will change from a CO2 absorbing system to one that emits CO2 maybe 70 years ahead of predictions. Antarctica has long been a place where scientists could agree that there would be no appreciable change because of global warming for another 100 years. New gravity measuring satellites that are 100 times more powerful than the previous satellites show that Antarctica has not only started losing more ice than it is gaining, but it is now losing ice as fast as Greenland. – 100 years ahead of schedule.

Oh, and the rest of the story about that article that George Wills wrote? He is either taking things out of context, or doesn't understand or who knows why he says what he says. The Arctic Climate Research Center at the University of Illinois says (about Wills claim that Arctic Sea Ice today is at 1979 levels) "It is disturbing that the Washington Post would publish such information without first checking the facts", and the World Meteorological Association says (to Wills Claim that the WMO says there has been global warming for a decade) that "The long-term upward trend of global warming, mostly driven by greenhouse gas emissions, is continuing. Global temperatures in 2008 are expected to be above the long-term average. The decade from 1998 to 2007 has been the warmest on record, and the global average surface temperature has risen by 0.74C since the beginning of the 20th Century."

Today, in light of science fact, not science belief, we do not need to be wasting valuable efforts on public discussion that has long been settled. The debate is over. Climate change is worse than the scientists have assumed. We have a lot of serious work to do.

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