

**The Week That Was: 2012-09-22 (September 22, 2012)**  
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**The Science and Environmental Policy Project**

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**Quote of the Week:** *"To single out one variable, namely radiation through the atmosphere and the associated 'greenhouse effect,' as being the primary driving force of atmospheric and oceanic climate, is a simplistic and absurd way to view the complex interaction of forces between the land, ocean, atmosphere, and outer space."* Robert E. Stevenson [H/t Dennis Ambler]

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**Number of the Week:** \$860,000,000,000 – Each Year?

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**THIS WEEK:**

**By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)**

**Global Warming Skepticism – a Medical Condition?** The controversy continues regarding a paper in press in Psychological Science by Stephan Lewandowsky et al. of the University of Western Australia. The title is 'NASA faked the moon landing, Therefore (Climate) Science is a Hoax: An Anatomy of the Motivated Rejection of Science.'

<http://websites.psychology.uwa.edu.au/labs/cogscience/documents/LskyetalPsychScienceinPressClimateConspiracy.pdf>

There are many comments in the blogs on how deficient the paper is including those by Thomas Fuller and Steven McIntyre. McIntyre hones in on the statistical deficiencies in the paper and the inability to replicate the findings.

Fuller's approach is broader. He brings out that for decades it has been common practice by some to demonize opponents including claiming the opponents have a medical condition. For example, in 1851 (Fuller dates it as 1861) Dr Samuel Cartwright invented the term *drapetomania* to describe what he claimed to be a mental deficiency in slaves who wished to flee captivity.

Apparently in Lewandowsky's view, those who demand observational data supporting claims that human emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming / climate change must be suffering from a mental deficiency. They simply cannot accept the recognized authority of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

One wonders how Lewandowsky et al. would treat the Right Climate Stuff Team – retired members of the Apollo team who are demanding observational data from those who are spreading global warming / climate change fears. Are they living a special form of dementia? Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

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**House Testimony:** On Thursday, the Energy and Commerce Committee of the US House of Representatives held a public hearing on a bill to prohibit the EPA from issuing final rules imposing emission standards (CO<sub>2</sub>) on public utilities unless and until Carbon Capture and Storage is proven to be technologically and economically feasible. The most significant testimony came from John Christy of the University of Alabama, Huntsville. In his written testimony he summarized the significant scientific issues involve. The five point summary is worth remembering. It can be paraphrased as follows 1) there is nothing unusual about current extreme

weather events; 2) the climate models are not supported by observations and Arctic ice conditions are not meaningful unless discussed in light of Antarctic ice conditions; 3) recent research showing biases in surface data make the surface data sets of limited value; 4) the claimed consensus reports are murky and climate science funding is highly biased; and 5) CO2 is plant food and increasing CO2 benefits humanity. For links please see Challenging the Orthodoxy and for the oral testimony please see:

<http://energycommerce.house.gov/hearing/american-energy-initiative-focus-hr-6172>

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**Quote of the Week:** The above quote comes from a paper by Robert Stevenson who was Secretary General of the International Association for the Physical Science of the Oceans (IAPSO) from 1987 to 1995. It was part of statement issued by IAPSO and “sister associations of Meteorology (IAMAP), Hydrology (IAHS), and Volcanology (IAVCEI), all within our “mother union” International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG)” to the International Commission of Science Unions prior to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference, which led to the creation of the IPCC. Of course, the statement was ignored.

Stevenson states that focusing on the atmosphere was wrong. The focus should be on the oceans, which are a far greater driver of climate change. The oceans warm from sunlight and, to a small extent, from infrared radiation from greenhouse gases. But the greenhouse radiation affects only the top few millimeters of the ocean. He is quite emphatic that the atmosphere cannot warm the oceans and it is the other way around. He also addressed the NOAA paper by Levitus et al. which is used to claim that the missing atmospheric warming of the Southern Ocean is hiding in the deep ocean, as claimed by James Hansen. Stevenson’s older paper seems consistent with Bob Tisdale’s new book as reviewed by Donald Rapp and linked to in last week’s TWTW. Please see link under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

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**Better Models Needed:** *Nature* Magazine has an editorial stating better models are needed before exceptional weather events can be attributed to human-caused global warming / climate change. In response, Roger Pielke Sr, states that a whole new approach is needed before we can begin to attribute extreme weather events to human actions. Given the comments by Stevenson, above, and our general ignorance of the role of oceans in global warming / climate change, Pielke’s suggestion deserves serious consideration. Please see links under Models v. Observations.

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**Group Think:** Tim Ball discusses the Climategate emails in light of the concept of Group Think. The “hockey-stick” Team apparently believed they would never be uncovered. In addition to Ball’s comments, one must contrast the extreme confidence the climate establishment has expressed in the findings of the IPCC and the questioning a few members of the Team had of the physical evidence. In misleading policy makers and the general public on the certainty, actually great uncertainty, of the science the climate establishment exhibited character traits that are neither scientific nor personally admirable. Please see link under Climategate Continued.

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**The Mania:** The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) hosted an hour-long show that included some diverse commentary on global warming / climate change. Anthony Watts was among those included. The outrage was immediate. How could PBS include a person who runs the most popular blog on climate issues and who has demonstrated that the siting of weather stations by NOAA is deficient? The intolerance of many who claim to have open minds is clearly evident. It

will be amusing to see how this event plays out over the next few days. Please see links under The Mania.

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**Melting Ice:** The ice melt in the Arctic has stopped and the Arctic Ocean is beginning to re-freeze as the sun has passed the September equinox. Satellite measurements showed that the ice extent of the Arctic was the least since satellite measurements began in 1979, exceeding the previous low in 2007. The alarmists are making much of the fact, as if it is proof of human-caused global warming. The skeptics are countering by pointing out that the Antarctic ice extent is exceeding past measurements.

The satellite measurements have a brief history. Other measurements of Arctic ice indicate that the current melt is not unprecedented, and the beach shelves of northern Greenland indicate that the Arctic may have been largely ice free some 8,000 years ago.

But two observations can be made from some of the comments on the Arctic event. One, many of those who declare the satellite measurements of ice melt are significant ignore satellite measurements of temperatures, which show no warming trend for over a decade and these are the only globally comprehensive measurements of temperatures. Two, some are suggesting the recent events support the hypothesis that as Arctic ice shrinks, Antarctic ice expands, and vice-versa. This suggests a yet unexplained oscillation unrelated to carbon dioxide. In the solar-cosmic ray hypothesis, Svensmark et al. suggested this oscillation may be related to cloud cover. When there are fewer clouds, the Arctic warms from more sunlight, but the Antarctic cools because its ice is more highly reflective than clouds. Please see links under Changing Sea Ice.

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**Model Predictions:** University of Arizona climate scientists claim they have tested the global climate models and found them “good” for making long-range predictions but “less good” in making shorter-range predictions and regional predictions. The last part of the claim is well established. Very simply, the models fail at regional predictions. Sometimes one model will make certain regional predictions while another will make opposite regional predictions.

But, the main part of the claim, that the models are “good” for long-range predictions and “less good” for short-range predictions is absurd. The models failed to predict the current trend of over a decade of no warming. So how can the models be good for long-range predictions? Very simply the models are tested against themselves – a form of circular argument.

According to the IPCC, the models contain some 16 forcing variables and for 11 variables the level of understanding is poor to very poor. In some cases the sign is not known. That is, it is not known will the variable enhance or reduce warming. The values of these variables are calculated by the models using historic data. If the model is then used to forecast climate change from 1980 to 2010, it already has built into the variables the historic data and should do quite well. Testing models against data used to establish the values of the variables establishes little, other than the models are consistent. The real test of any climate model is to predict future climate change and thus far the models are doing poorly. They failed to predict the current trend of no warming. Please see link under Defending the Orthodoxy.

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**Amplifications and Corrections:** Christopher Essex of the World Federation of Scientists corrected a false impression in last week’s TWTW that came from a linked article. Contrary to

what was stated, the statement "Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use" appears in the glossary of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4).

Since, according to the link, the statement now appears in the *Summary for Policymakers* of the draft Fifth Assessment Report. Now, it appears that the definition will take a more prominent position. It was the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) that over-emphasized human caused changes in the composition of the atmosphere.

With a ~~wiry~~ wry smile, Donna Bethell ~~respectively~~ respectfully corrected Word choice in last week's TWTW reminding all that a spell checker is not a dictionary.

As always, TWTW greatly appreciates amplifications and corrections.

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**Number of the Week:** \$860,000,000,000 – each year? As discussed in TWTW last week, James Hansen is being politically active in promoting his plan of a carbon tax of \$115 per ton, phased in over 10 years. (Actually it is a tax on carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in CO2 equivalence.) According to the EPA, in 2010 the US total emissions amounted to 6,822 million metric tonnes of CO2 equivalence, or about 7,500 million short tons. If the tax did not reduce CO2 emissions, this would calculate to be tax revenues of about \$863,000,000,000 each year.

No wonder politicians are interested. The amount is more than the \$830 Billion spent on the stimulus bill that the Congressional Research Service models calculated would prevent US unemployment from exceeding 8% -- it has not been so low in over three years. Also, \$860,000,000,000 is greater than the initial figure put on the sub-prime lending crisis – which cascaded into the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent recession. [H/t Power Engineer]

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### **ARTICLES:**

For the numbered articles below please see this week's TWTW at: [www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org). The articles are at the end of the pdf.

#### **1. Puff, the Magic Drag on the Economy**

Time to let the pernicious production tax credit for wind power blow away.

By Lamar Alexander And Mike Pompeo, WSJ, Sep 18, 2012

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444517304577653403069902104.html?mod=ITP\\_opinion\\_0](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444517304577653403069902104.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0)

#### **2. After Spill, Gulf Oil Drilling Rebounds**

Production Dipped After Deepwater Horizon Disaster; New Finds Will Lift Output 28% in a Decade

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Sep 20, 2012

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443890304578008573749823206.html?mod=WSJ\\_hps\\_MIDDLE\\_Video\\_second](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443890304578008573749823206.html?mod=WSJ_hps_MIDDLE_Video_second)

#### **3. Environmental Protection Up in Smoke**

Dead wood fuels wildfires. Too bad lawsuits keep the Forest Service from thinning out the trees.

By Terry Anderson, WSJ, Sep 17, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443884104577647903145409924.html?mod=W>  
[SJ Opinion LEFTTopOpinion](#)

"fire is the environmentalist's way of thinning the forests."

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### **NEWS YOU CAN USE:**

#### ***Climategate Continued***

##### **Classic Groupthink Behavior Apparently Exposed in Leaked CRU Emails**

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Sep 19, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/classic-groupthink-behavior-apparently-exposed-in-leaked-cru-emails-2/>

#### ***Challenging the Orthodoxy***

##### **Yes, the Ocean Has Warmed; No, It's Not 'Global Warming'**

By Dr. Robert E. Stevenson, 21<sup>st</sup> Cent Science Tech, Summer, 2000

<http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/articles/ocean.html>

##### **House tries to save a sane energy policy from Obama's failed green energy assault**

John Christy's Statement, ICECAP, Sep 20, 2012

[http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/house\\_tries\\_to\\_save\\_a\\_sane\\_energy\\_policy\\_from\\_obamas\\_failed\\_green\\_energy\\_as/](http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/house_tries_to_save_a_sane_energy_policy_from_obamas_failed_green_energy_as/)

##### **The Warming of the Global Oceans – Are Manmade Greenhouse Gases Important or Impotent?**

By Bob Tisdale, WUWT, Sep 16, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/16/tisdale-the-warming-of-the-global-oceans-are-manmade-greenhouse-gases-important-or-impotent/>

#### **BS detectors**

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Sep 15, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/09/15/bs-detectors/#more-9776>

[SEPP Comment: According to Curry, Larry Bell's interview with Bert Rutan revealed that Rutan's BS detector went in high alert when he began to seek the data supporting human caused dangerous warming.]

#### ***Defending the Orthodoxy***

##### **Steven Schneider's 1992 argument against balance in science reporting**

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 19, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/19/steven-schneiders-1992-argument-against-balance-in-science-reporting/>

#### **UA Climate Scientists put Predictions to the Test**

A new study has found that climate-prediction models are good at predicting long-term climate patterns on a global scale but lose their edge when applied to time frames shorter than three decades and on sub-continental scales.

By Daniel Stolte, Univ of Arizona, Sep 17, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://uanews.org/story/ua-climate-scientists-put-predictions-test>

### **Warming ocean could start big shift of Antarctic ice**

By Alvin Stone, Sydney, Australia (SPX), Sep 21, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/Warming\\_ocean\\_could\\_start\\_big\\_shift\\_of\\_Antarctic\\_ice\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/Warming_ocean_could_start_big_shift_of_Antarctic_ice_999.html)

### ***Questioning the Orthodoxy***

#### **Review of Humlum Et Al 2012 “The Phase Relation Between Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide And Global Temperature”**

By Donald Rapp, Pielke Climate Science, Sep 20, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/20/review-of-humlum-et-al-2012-the-phase-relation-between-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide-and-global-temperature-by-donald-rapp/>

*[SEPP Comment: Exploring the possibility of a relationship between El Niños and atmospheric carbon dioxide as well carbon dioxide and global temperatures.]*

### **An assessment of current alarmist propaganda.**

By Pointman, Sep 7, 2012

<http://thepointman.wordpress.com/2012/09/07/an-assessment-of-current-alarmist-propaganda/>

*[SEPP Comment: The reliance on pseudo-psychology and polls in attacking skeptics indicates the failure of the alarmists to produce compelling science and that they are losing the scientific battle among politicians and the public.]*

### **Climate Change: 'Hoax' Or Crime Of The Century?**

By Mark Hendrickson, Forbes, Sep 16, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/markhendrickson/2012/09/16/climate-change-hoax-or-crime-of-the-century/>

### ***Expanding the Orthodoxy***

#### **The president decides to stick with climatism**

By Steve Goreham, Tampa Tribune, Sep 17, 2012

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/opinion/2012/sep/17/naopino2-the-president-decides-to-stick-with-clima-ar-502803/>

### **Report: Climate change means taxpayers could pay for more disaster cleanups**

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Sep 20, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/250697-report-taxpayers-may-pay-for-more-disaster-cleanups>

*[SEPP Comment: In the past, insurance companies got out of paying for certain disasters under the phrase of “act of god.” Now will the out be “act of man” and make taxpayers pay? In a related matter, some California politicians such as Senators Boxer and Feinstein proposed a bill to have the Federal government issue earthquake insurances for California.]*

### ***Problems within the Orthodoxy***

#### **Effectiveness and impact of climate change mitigation measures unclear**

By Staff Writers, Helsinki, Finland (SPX), Sep 19, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/Effectiveness\\_and\\_impact\\_of\\_climate\\_change\\_mitigation\\_measures\\_unclear\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/Effectiveness_and_impact_of_climate_change_mitigation_measures_unclear_999.html)

### ***Seeking a Common Ground***

#### **Uncertainty in health impacts of climate change**

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Sep 20, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/09/20/uncertainty-in-health-impacts-of-climate-change/#more-9847>

*[SEPP Comment: A different take on post-normal science – recognizing that public policy recognize ignorance of the future.]*

#### **The Case Of The Alternating Ice Sheets**

By Doug Hoffman, GWPF, Sep 20, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/doug-hoffman-the-case-of-the-alternating-ice-sheets/>

#### **A new typology for the climate debate**

By Lloyd Robertson, Bishop Hill, Sep 15, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/9/15/a-new-typology-for-the-climate-debate.html>

### ***Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?***

#### **When it rains, it pours**

By Jennifer Chu for MIT News

Boston MA (SPX) Sep 19, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/When\\_it\\_rains\\_it\\_pours\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/When_it_rains_it_pours_999.html)

#### **U.S. underestimates costs of carbon pollution and climate change**

By Staff Writers, Heidelberg, Germany (SPX), Sep 18, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/US\\_underestimates\\_costs\\_of\\_carbon\\_pollution\\_and\\_climate\\_change\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/US_underestimates_costs_of_carbon_pollution_and_climate_change_999.html)

*[SEPP Comment: Carbon does not pollute.]*

#### **Most coral reefs are at risk unless climate change is drastically limited**

By Staff Writers, Potsdam, Germany (SPX), Sep 18, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/Most\\_coral\\_reefs\\_are\\_at\\_risk\\_unless\\_climate\\_change\\_is\\_drastically\\_limited\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/Most_coral_reefs_are_at_risk_unless_climate_change_is_drastically_limited_999.html)

*[SEPP Comment: Extrapolating the 1998 El Niño as being the new constant. It was the rapid change that caused bleaching to which the corals adjusted. Of course, the possible reduction in ocean alkalinity, falsely called acidification, is included.]*

### ***Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.***

#### **NASA Faked Moon Landing—Academic Psychologists Swoon, Tie It To Climate Change**

By William Briggs, His Blog, Sep 16, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://wmbriggs.com/blog/?p=6164>

#### **Conspiracy-Theorist Lewandowsky Tries to Manufacture Doubt**

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Sep 20, 2012

<http://climateaudit.org/2012/09/20/conspiracy-theorist-lewandowsky-tries-to-manufacture-doubt/#more-16835>

**Toodle, Lew**

By Thomas Fuller, WUWT, Sep 1, 2012  
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/15/toodle-lew/>

**'Planetary emergency' due to Arctic melt, experts warn**

By Mariano Andrade, AFP, Sep 20, 2012  
[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jKKr0IRUKbR6Se7mFZu\\_qfcFWZTw?docId=CNG.fecc4bb8fd2384ef8b3d22269087bee4.1f1](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jKKr0IRUKbR6Se7mFZu_qfcFWZTw?docId=CNG.fecc4bb8fd2384ef8b3d22269087bee4.1f1)  
[SEPP Comments: Experts in all things except the history of their area of expertise.]

**Climate and National Security: Exploring the Connection**

By Jeff Kueter, George Marshall Institute, Sep 17, 2012  
<http://www.marshall.org/article.php?id=1122>  
[SEPP Comment: Analysis of the false claim that climate change threatens US national security.]

***The Mania***

**Insane reaction to the PBS interview with Anthony Watts**

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Sep 20, 2012  
<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/09/insane-reaction-to-pbs-interview-with.html#more>

**The Full PBS Newshour interview with Watts, Muller, Curry and others**

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 17, 2012  
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/17/the-full-pbs-newshour-interview-with-watts-muller-curry-and-others/>

***Models v. Observations***

**The Hindcast Skill Of The CMIP Ensembles For The Surface Air Temperature Trend” By Sakaguchi Et Al 2012**

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Climate Science, Sep 19, 2012  
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/19/the-hindcast-skill-of-the-cmip-ensembles-for-the-surface-air-temperature-trend-by-sakaguchi-et-al-2012/>

**Extreme weather**

Better models are needed before exceptional events can be reliably linked to global warming.  
Editorial, Nature, Sep 19, 2012 [H/t GWPF]  
<http://www.nature.com/news/extreme-weather-1.11428>  
[SEPP Comment: See comments in link below.]

**My Comment On The Nature Article “Extreme Weather – Better Models Are Needed Before Exceptional Events Can Be Reliably Linked To Global Warming”**

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 29, 2012  
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/19/my-comment-on-the-nature-article-extreme-weather-better-models-are-needed-before-exceptional-events-can-be-reliably-linked-to-global-warming/>

**Comments On The Nature Article “Afternoon Rain More Likely Over Drier Soils” By Taylor Et Al 2012 – More Rocking Of The IPCC Boat**

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 17, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/17/comments-on-the-nature-article-afternoon-rain-more-likely-over-drier-soils-by-taylor-et-al-2012-more-rocking-of-the-ipcc-boat/>

### **Measurement Issues**

**NOAA's 'Janus moment' – while claiming 'The American public can be confident in NOAA's long-standing surface temperature record', they fund an experiment to investigate the effects of station siting and heat sinks/sources on temperature data**

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 19, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/19/noaas-janus-moment-while-claiming-the-american-public-can-be-confident-in-noaas-long-standing-surface-temperature-record-they-fund-an-experiment-to-investigate-the-effects-of-sta/>

### **Changing Weather**

**Our Chapter "Dealing with complexity and extreme events using a bottom-up, resource-based vulnerability perspective" By Pielke Sr Et Al 2012 Has Appeared**

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 21, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/21/our-chapter-dealing-with-complexity-and-extreme-events-using-a-bottom-up-resource-based-vulnerability-perspective-by-pielke-sr-et-al-2012-has-appeared/>

*[SEPP Comment: Proposing an inversion of the IPCC approach.]*

**Himalayan glaciers retreating at accelerated rate in some regions but not others**

by Staff Writers

Washington DC (SPX) Sep 18, 2012

[http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Himalayan\\_glaciers\\_retreating\\_at\\_accelerated\\_rate\\_in\\_some\\_regions\\_but\\_not\\_others\\_999.html](http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Himalayan_glaciers_retreating_at_accelerated_rate_in_some_regions_but_not_others_999.html)

*[SEPP Comment: They are also advancing in some areas but not newsworthy until they threaten villagers.]*

**New Paper "Observations Of Increased Tropical Rainfall Preceded By Air Passage Over Forests" By Spracklen Et al 2012**

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 20, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/20/new-paper-observations-of-increased-tropical-rainfall-preceded-by-air-passage-over-forests-by-spracklen-et-al-2012/>

*[SEPP Comment: Cutting down forests can lead to a reduction in rainfall down wind of the forests.]*

### **Changing Climate**

**Did a 'Forgotten' Meteor Have a Deadly, Icy Double-Punch?**

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Sep 19, 2012

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120919103612.htm>

*[SEPP Comment: A giant meteor may trigger an ice age, but why would it trigger a series of ice ages?]*

**Massive Eltanin Meteor 2.5 million years ago set off mass tsunami, changed the climate?**

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Sep 21, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/09/massive-eltanin-meteor-2-5-million-years-ago-set-off-mass-tsunami-changed-the-climate/#more-24053>

[SEPP Comment: Additional detail on the event in the above link.]

### **Onset of the Next Glaciation**

By David Archibald, WUWT, Sep 16, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/16/onset-of-the-next-glaciation/>

[SEPP Comment: It will come, but when?]

### **How fast can ice sheets respond to climate change?**

By Staff Writers, Buffalo NY (SPX), Sep 18, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/How\\_fast\\_can\\_ice\\_sheets\\_respond\\_to\\_climate\\_change\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/How_fast_can_ice_sheets_respond_to_climate_change_999.html)

### **Arctic Lower Tropospheric Temperature Trends Since 1979**

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Climate Science, Sep 21, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/21/arctic-lower-tropospheric-temperature-trends-since-1979/>

[SEPP Comment: There may be something else going on in the Arctic other than a small, simple warming trend.]

### **Arctic v Antarctic Temperatures**

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Sep 20, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2012/09/20/arctic-v-antarctic-temperatures/>

### **Changing Seas**

#### **NOAA Data (Again) Shows No Acceleration In Sea Level Rise. “CO2 Climate Hypothesis Is In A Free-Fall”**

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Sep 21, 2012 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://notrickszone.com/2012/09/21/noaa-data-again-shows-no-sea-level-rise-co2-climate-hypothesis-is-in-a-free-fall/>

### **Sea Surface Temperatures Reach Record Highs on Northeast Continental Shelf**

By Staff Writers, Woods Hole MA (SPX), Sep 20, 2012

[http://www.terraily.com/reports/Sea\\_Surface\\_Temperatures\\_Reach\\_Record\\_Highs\\_on\\_Northeast\\_Continental\\_Shelf\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/Sea_Surface_Temperatures_Reach_Record_Highs_on_Northeast_Continental_Shelf_999.html)

[SEPP Comment: Exciting news – a whole six month period! The previous high was 1951, but the article does not report the extent to which the previous high was exceeded. It may be will within the error range of the measuring procedures and instruments.]

### **Changing Sea Ice**

#### **The Real Arctic and Antarctic Story**

By Joe D’Aleo, ICECAP, Sep 20, 2012

[http://icecap.us/index.php/go/political-climate/the\\_real\\_arctic\\_and\\_antarctic\\_story/](http://icecap.us/index.php/go/political-climate/the_real_arctic_and_antarctic_story/)

### **The Case Of The Alternating Ice Sheets**

By Doug Hoffman, GWPF, Sep 20, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/doug-hoffman-the-case-of-the-alternating-ice-sheets/>

**Sea Ice News Volume 3 number 13 – 2012 Arctic sea ice minimum reached, it's all gain from here**

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 19, 2012

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**Arctic sea ice shrinks to lowest level on record: US**

By Staff Writers, Washington (AFP), Sept 19, 2012

[http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Arctic sea ice shrinks to lowest level on record US 999.html](http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Arctic%20sea%20ice%20shrinks%20to%20lowest%20level%20on%20record%20US%20999.html)

**Antarctic Sea Ice Reaches Record High: IPCC Models Predicted The Opposite**

By Administrator, GWPF, Sep 18, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/antarctic-sea-ice-reaches-record-high-ipcc-models-predicted-the-opposite/>

**Antarctic Sea Ice Sets Another Record**

By James Taylor, Forbes, Sep 20, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2012/09/19/antarctic-sea-ice-sets-another-record/>

**Antarctic Sea Ice Growth Ruins A Good Global Warming Story**

Editorial, IBD, Sep 20, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/092012-626504-antarctic-sea-ice-sets-another-record-high.htm>

***Changing Earth***

**PNAS: Topper site in middle of comet controversy**

By Peggy Binette, Univ of South Carolina, Sep 17, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.sc.edu/news/newsarticle.php?nid=4706#.UFtvIY1IRIz>

*[SEPP Comment: Further thoughts on the meteor explanation of the sudden drop and increase in temperatures during the Younger Dryas. The temperature increase far exceeded anything experienced since the Little Ice Age.]*

***Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine***

**Legitimate fears over GM crops?**

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Sep 20, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/legitimate-fears-over-gm-crops>

***Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC***

***For a full list of articles see [www.NIPCCreport.org](http://www.NIPCCreport.org)***

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Reference: Mergeay, J. and Santamaria, L. 2012. Evolution and biodiversity: the evolutionary basis of biodiversity and its potential for adaptation to global change. *Evolutionary Applications* 5: 103-106.

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### **The Dynamic Behavior of India's Chhota Shigri Glacier**

Reference: Azam, M.F., Wagnon, P., Ramanathan, A., Vincent, C., Sharma, P., Arnaud, Y., Linda, A., Pottakkal, J.G., Chevallier, P., Singh, V.B. and Berthier, E. 2012. From balance to imbalance: a shift in the dynamic behavior of Chhota Shigri glacier, western Himalaya, India. *Journal of Glaciology* 58: 315-324.

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### **A Two-Millennia Temperature History of the Southwestern Corner of Canada's Yukon Territory**

Reference: Bunbury, J. and Gajewski, K. 2012. Temperatures of the past 2000 years inferred from lake sediments, southwest Yukon Territory, Canada. *Quaternary Research* 77: 355-367.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/sep/19sep2012a1.html>

### ***Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes***

#### **Would a Carbon Dioxide Tax Be Efficient?**

Summary, Benjamin Zycher, NCPA, Sep 5, 2012

[http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article\\_ID=22328&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EnvPD](http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22328&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EnvPD)

### **Airbus ministers seek suspension of EU emissions plan – Hintze**

By Maria Sheahan and Victoria Bryan, Reuters, Sep 13, 2012

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/09/13/uk-germany-airshow-emissions-idUKBRE88C16E20120913>

### ***EPA and other Regulators on the March***

#### **Is the EPA superagency bigger than the President and Congress?**

By Bill Wilson, Net Right Daily, Sep 17, 2012

<http://netrightdaily.com/2012/09/is-the-epa-superagency-bigger-than-the-president-and-congress/>

### ***Energy Issues – Non-US***

#### **Resetting Gazprom in the Golden Age of Gas**

By Alan Riley, European Energy Review, Sep 17, 2012

[http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?email=ken@haapala.com&id\\_mailing=310&toegang=06eb61b839a0cefee4967c67ccb099dc&id=3853](http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?email=ken@haapala.com&id_mailing=310&toegang=06eb61b839a0cefee4967c67ccb099dc&id=3853)

### **Canadian oil discounts narrow as trains oust pipes**

By Aaron Clark, Bloomberg, Sep 20, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/09/20/canadian-oil-discounts-narrow-as-trains-oust-pipes/>

[SEPP Comment: Washington blocking the Keystone pipeline will not prevent the oil from reaching a market.]

## ***Energy Issues -- US***

### **Shell scraps efforts to hit Arctic oil this year**

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Sep 17, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/249777-shell-scraps-effort-to-hit-arctic-oil-this-year>

### **Shell has ‘every intention’ of pushing into Arctic waters despite setbacks**

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Sep 18, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/250019-shell-has-every-intention-of-pushing-into-arctic-despite-setbacks>

## ***Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?***

### **EU MPs call for 'robust' oversight of shale gas development**

By Staff Writers, Brussels (AFP), Sept 19, 2012

[http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/EU\\_MPs\\_call\\_for\\_robust\\_oversight\\_of\\_shale\\_gas\\_development\\_999.html](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/EU_MPs_call_for_robust_oversight_of_shale_gas_development_999.html)

### **Hydraulic Fracturing: Critical for Energy Production, Jobs and Economic Growth**

By Nicolas Loriz, Summarized, NCPA, Sep 13, 2012

[http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article\\_ID=22354&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EnvPD](http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22354&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EnvPD)

### **Gas from shale is making Texas schools rich**

By Staff Writers, Houston Chronicle, Sep 16, 2012

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Gas-from-shale-is-making-Texas-schools-rich-3869760.php>

*[SEPP Comment: What were some of the poorest school districts in the state, receiving funds from wealth districts as required by Texas law, are now among the wealthiest school districts and contribute funds to the poor districts. Of course, some people consider this to be a problem.]*

## ***Return of King Coal?***

### **India Has Big Plans for Burning Coal**

The subcontinental nation may contend with China as the world's largest coal-burner, with attendant climate change impacts

By Lisa Friedman and ClimateWire, Scientific American, Sep 17, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=india-has-big-plans-for-burning-coal>

## ***Nuclear Energy and Fears***

### **Japan Presents Nuclear-Free Energy Strategy—and Stops Short of Endorsing It**

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Sep 20, 2012

[http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4967.html?hq\\_e=el&hq\\_m=2526534&hq\\_l=4&hq\\_v=5e660500d0](http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4967.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2526534&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0)

### **GAO Report: Spent Nuclear Fuel Stored Onsite Could Double Before Disposal**

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Sep 20, 2012

[http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4968.html?hq\\_e=el&hq\\_m=2526534&hq\\_l=5&hq\\_v=5e660500d0](http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4968.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2526534&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0)

*[SEPP Comment: What effect this will have on the moratorium the courts have placed on the issuance of new nuclear plant permits remains to be seen.]*

### ***Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind***

#### **Wind Consequences (Part III: Total Costs)**

By Kent Hawkins, Master Resource, Sep 20, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/09/wind-consequences-iii3/#more-21800>

#### **Solar Reality**

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Sep 18, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/09/18/solar-reality/>

#### **Governments burn \$70 billion a year subsidizing renewables, and wild claims of “fossil fuel subsidies” debunked**

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Sep 17, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/09/government-burn-70-billion-a-year-subsidizing-renewables-and-wild-claims-of-fossil-fuel-subsidies-debunked/#more-23989>

### ***Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other***

#### **Renewable Fuel Standard, Ethanol Use, and Corn Prices**

By David W. Kreuzer, Heritage Foundation, Sep 17, 2012

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/09/the-renewable-fuel-standard-ethanol-use-and-corn-prices>

### ***Oh Mann!***

#### **Update on ATI v. UVa/Mann**

By Staff Writer, ATI, Sep 18, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/18/statementupdate-on-ati-v-uvamann/>

#### **U.Va. wins key ruling in Prince William global warming-FOIA case involving Michael Mann**

By Tom Jackman, Washington Post, Sep 18, 2012

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-state-of-nova/post/uva-wins-key-ruling-in-prince-william-global-warming-foia-case-involving-michael-mann/2012/09/18/6c422d98-0133-11e2-b257-e1c2b3548a4a\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-state-of-nova/post/uva-wins-key-ruling-in-prince-william-global-warming-foia-case-involving-michael-mann/2012/09/18/6c422d98-0133-11e2-b257-e1c2b3548a4a_blog.html)

#### **ClimateGate Star Michael Mann Courts Legal Disaster**

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Sep 18, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/09/18/climategate-star-michael-mann-courts-legal-disaster/>

### ***Environmental Industry***

#### **“Silent Spring at 50: The False Crises of Rachel Carson” (Reassessing environmentalism’s fateful turn from science to advocacy)**

By Roger Meiners, Master Resource, Sep 21, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/09/silent-spring-at-50/#more-21935>

**NRDC Wind Jobs Report Doesn't Make the Grade (250 MW does not create 1,000+ jobs)**

By John Droz, Jr, Master Resource, Sep 19, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/09/nrdc-wind-jobs-report-fails/#more-21853>

**Other Scientific News**

**The "slippery slope to slime": Overgrown algae causing coral reef declines**

By Staff Writers, Corvallis OR (SPX), Sep 21, 2012

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/The\\_slippery\\_slope\\_to\\_slime\\_Overgrown\\_algae\\_causing\\_coral\\_reef\\_declines\\_999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/The_slippery_slope_to_slime_Overgrown_algae_causing_coral_reef_declines_999.html)

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**BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:**

**Global Warming: Evolutionary Straitjacket Means Flies Can't Take the Heat**

Many species of fruit fly lack the ability to adapt effectively to predicted increases in global temperatures and may face extinction in the near future, according to new research.

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Sep 17, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120918090814.htm>

*[SEPP Comment: Another study based on a predicted increase in temperatures from models that are not sufficiently tested to predict.]*

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**ARTICLES:**

**1. Puff, the Magic Drag on the Economy**

Time to let the pernicious production tax credit for wind power blow away.

By Lamar Alexander And Mike Pompeo, WSJ, Sep 18, 2012

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444517304577653403069902104.html?mod=IT\\_P\\_opinion\\_0](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444517304577653403069902104.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_0)

As Congress works to reduce spending and avert a debt crisis, lawmakers will have to decide which government projects are truly national priorities, and which are wasteful. A prime example of the latter is the production tax credit for wind power. It is set to expire on Dec. 31—but may be extended yet again, for the seventh time.

This special provision in the tax code was first enacted in 1992 as a temporary subsidy to enable a struggling industry to become competitive. Today the provision provides a credit against taxes of \$22 per megawatt hour of wind energy generated.

From 2009 to 2013, federal revenues lost to wind-power developers are estimated to be \$14 billion—\$6 billion from the production tax credit, plus \$8 billion courtesy of an alternative-energy subsidy in the stimulus package—according to the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Treasury Department. If Congress were to extend the production tax credit, it would mean an additional \$12 billion cost to taxpayers over the next 10 years.

There are many reasons to let this giveaway expire, including wind energy's inherent unreliability and its inability to stand on its own two feet after 20 years. But one of the most compelling reasons is provided in a study released Sept. 14 by the NorthBridge Group, an energy consultancy. The study discusses a government-created economic distortion called "negative pricing."

This is how it works. Coal- and nuclear-fired plants provide a reliable supply of electricity when the demand is high, as on a hot summer day. They generate at lower levels when the demand is low, such as at night.

But wind producers collect a tax credit for every kilowatt hour they generate, whether utilities need the electricity or not. If the wind is blowing, they keep cranking the windmills.

Why? The NorthBridge Group's report ("Negative Electricity Prices and the Production Tax Credit") finds that government largess is so great that wind producers can actually pay the electrical grid to take their power when demand is low and still turn a profit by collecting the credit—and they are increasingly doing so. The wind pretax subsidy is actually higher than the average price for electricity in many of the wholesale markets tracked by the Energy Information Administration.

This practice drives the price of electricity down in the short run. Wind-energy supporters say that's a good thing. But it is hazardous to the economy's health in the long run.

Temporarily lower energy prices driven by wind-power's negative pricing will cripple clean-coal and nuclear-power companies. But running coal and nuclear out of business is not good for the U.S. economy. There is no way a country like this one—which uses 20% to 25% of all the electricity in the world—can operate with generators that turn only when the wind blows.

The Obama administration and other advocates of wind power argue that the subsidy provided by the tax credit allows the wind industry to sustain American jobs. But they are jobs that exist only because of the subsidy. Keeping a weak technology alive that can't make it on its own won't create nearly as many jobs as the private sector could create if it had the kind of low-cost, reliable, clean electricity that wind power simply can't generate.

While the cost of renewable energy has declined over the years, it is still far more expensive than conventional sources. And even the administration's secretary of energy, Steven Chu, calls wind "a mature technology," which should mean it is sufficiently advanced to compete in a free market without government subsidies. If wind power cannot compete on its own after 20 years without costly special privileges, it never will.

*Mr. Alexander is a Republican senator from Tennessee. Mr. Pompeo is a Republican congressman from Kansas.*

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## **2. After Spill, Gulf Oil Drilling Rebounds**

Production Dipped After Deepwater Horizon Disaster; New Finds Will Lift Output 28% in a Decade

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Sep 20, 2012

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443890304578008573749823206.html?mod=WSJ\\_hps\\_MIDDLE\\_Video\\_second](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443890304578008573749823206.html?mod=WSJ_hps_MIDDLE_Video_second)

After a steep drop in oil production in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the U.S. Gulf of Mexico is set for an energy boom.

Gulf oil flows will increase by nearly 28% by 2022 to 1.8 million barrels per day, according to consulting firm Bentek Energy. Output will be boosted by huge projects like Exxon Mobil Corp.'s Hadrian field 250 miles off the coast of Louisiana and Chevron Corp.'s nearby Jack and St. Malo projects.

The Gulf accounted for nearly a third of U.S. oil production as recently as 2009. But onshore oil production has surged as oil companies use new extraction techniques to tap dense shale formations in places like the Eagle Ford shale Texas and the Bakken shale North Dakota. The Gulf now accounts for just 20% of U.S. output, and that number is predicted to decline to 15% by 2022 despite the expected surge in Gulf production.

Oil found offshore generally sells for more than onshore crude. That is partly because Gulf oil is easier to transport to Europe and trades at the higher prices crude fetches there. The result is that oil companies are eager to gear up offshore production, despite the growing challenges of drilling in new areas and deeper water.

The resurgence in the Gulf belies warnings from the energy industry that tougher regulations would curtail exploration there following the 2010 explosion at BP PLC's Macondo well. The blast killed 11 people on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig and led to the worst offshore oil spill in U.S. history.

Today the industry says it is learning to live with stricter safety oversight and slower permit reviews. The tougher regulatory environment is palatable because of high global oil prices, which have remained above \$90 a barrel for nearly two years.

"Bottom-line, the Gulf of Mexico is in considerably better shape than even the most ardent optimists envisioned following Macondo," said Bill Herbert, a managing director with investment bank Simmons & Co.

Some major energy companies are increasing their commitments to the Gulf, including Royal Dutch Shell, which earlier this year spent more than \$403 million to lease several new areas there. "The importance of the Gulf continues to grow for Shell, with significant discoveries and major projects in the pipeline," says Marvin Odom, president of Shell Oil Co.

BP, which is the area's largest oil producer and is expected to remain so, agreed recently to sell \$5.5 billion of assets to Plains Exploration & Production Co., while Brazilian oil giant Petroleo Brasileiro SA said this week that it may sell some of its Gulf projects.

But those moves reflect company-specific challenges rather than concerns over the Gulf, analysts say. Petrobras needs to focus on many projects back in Brazil.

BP, which will invest about \$4 billion a year in the Gulf over the next decade, needs money to pay for the aftermath of the 2010 spill. It has six deep-water rigs at work in the Gulf and plans to add two more by year-end, a record for the company.

The Gulf benefits from the extensive infrastructure in place there, which makes development easier. It is the most developed offshore oil-and-gas region in the world, according to Tyler Priest, a University of Iowa history professor who focuses on the energy industry.

Beginning with just a handful of wells off the beaches and marshes of Texas and Louisiana in the 1950s, the Gulf now has more than 4,000 platforms pumping oil and gas from 35,000 wells through nearly 30,000 miles of pipelines.

Including natural gas as well as oil, production in federal waters reached a peak of almost 1.8 million barrels per day in 2009. But the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill led to a six-month drilling moratorium as the government drafted new safety rules.

Oil and gas flows in 2010 were off just slightly from the 2009 peak, but dropped 18% in 2011 to 1.4 million barrels of oil equivalent. They are expected to bottom out this year at 1.3 million barrels.

Worst-case predictions for environmental damage didn't materialize following the spill, though a number of continuing studies indicate there may be long-term impacts on the Gulf's ecosystem. On Thursday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that in 2011 the Gulf's commercial seafood industry saw its highest volume of catches since 1999.

New regulations imposed after the oil spill spelled out specific standards for well design and construction, added new requirements for safety equipment and inspections, while requiring that drillers have quick access to a containment system similar to the one that ultimately stopped the Deepwater Horizon spill.

The new regulations also have slowed the pace at which energy companies receive federal permits. Exploration and development plans now take about 150 days compared with 54 days in the past, according to investment bank Tudor Pickering & Holt. Permits to drill specific wells now take about twice as long as before the disaster.

But the number of permits has risen sharply so far this year, to 105 as of August, versus 79 in all of 2011. "Today we see cooler heads and more pragmatic leadership with the regulators in Washington, and things are now working more smoothly in the Gulf," says James Noe, general counsel for drilling firm Hercules Offshore Inc.

The pipeline for future projects in the Gulf continues to grow. In June, 56 companies bid \$1.7 billion for the rights to explore more than 2.4 million acres of the Gulf controlled by the federal government.

Success in these new areas won't come easily, according to Tudor Pickering. Much of the drilling will tap into a region called the Lower Tertiary, where completed projects so far have produced about one-third the daily rate of earlier deep-water fields and taken about 30% longer to drill.

Many energy experts predicted only the biggest companies could meet new regulatory and financial requirements to drill in the Gulf, but that hasn't proved to be the case.

Houston Energy LP, a small independent firm, won five deep-water blocks in the most recent federal lease sale. "We went to the North Sea and other offshore areas to look into exploring, but when we came back we chose to dive right into the Gulf of Mexico," said Ron Neal, Houston Energy's CEO.

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### **3. Environmental Protection Up in Smoke**

Dead wood fuels wildfires. Too bad lawsuits keep the Forest Service from thinning out the trees.

By Terry Anderson, WSJ, Sep 17, 2012

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443884104577647903145409924.html?mod=WSJ\\_Opinion\\_LEFTTopOpinion](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443884104577647903145409924.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion)

"fire is the environmentalist's way of thinning the forests."

When the wildfires that are burning millions of acres in the West are finally smothered by winter snows, environmentalists undoubtedly will blame climate change. They might look in the mirror instead.

Environmental laws since the 1970s require public input into federal land-use decisions including logging on national forests. This has led to lawsuits challenging efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to prevent forest fires by thinning out trees (most of which are dead or diseased) and brush by machines and carefully controlled burns. This dead wood is the fuel that feeds catastrophic wildfires.

Removing the fuel reduces the likelihood of fires, and if fires do break out, makes them easier to fight. Meanwhile, the suppression of fires costs the federal government nearly \$2.5 billion annually.

A fuels-management project to log and thin 4,800 acres in the Bozeman, Mont., watershed exemplifies the problem. This project has been held up since 2010 on grounds that the environmental-impact assessment did not adequately protect the habitat of the Canadian lynx and the grizzly bear, both listed as threatened species.

Now a wildfire threatens the watershed, burning over 10,000 acres and costing more than \$2 million to fight. As one firefighter put it, "fire is the environmentalist's way of thinning the forests."

Jack Ward Thomas, President Clinton's forest service chief, noted a few years ago that court battles have tied the agency in a "Gordian knot" creating a "vicious cycle of increasing costs, time delays, and inability to carry out management actions." As a result, most national forests are a tinder box of old-growth trees ravaged by disease and insects.

Making matters worse, dense conifer canopies intercept rain and snow, with 30% lost to evaporation instead of soaking into the ground or flowing into rivers. When a little rain fell on the Bozeman fire on Aug. 31, the Forest Service reported that it was caught in the tree tops and quickly evaporated. An estimate by Wesleyan University's Helen Poulos and James Workman for California's Sierra Nevada Mountain Range puts the annual water loss due to evaporation at more than five trillion gallons. That is enough to supply Los Angeles for 26 years.

Forest fires also contribute significantly to atmospheric carbon. A 2007 study by the federally funded Center for Atmospheric Research found that "large wildfires in the western United States can pump as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in just a few weeks as cars do in those areas in an entire year." Scientists at Stanford University and the National Snow and Ice Data Center believe that carbon soot from wildfires is adding to the greenhouse effect and contributing to this summer's unusual thaw in the Arctic and Greenland.

Cutting the "Gordian knot" is necessary if the Forest Service is to properly manage national forest assets and reduce wildfires. A start would be to require environmental groups to post a sizable bond when they file lawsuits. If the area burns while the suit is in the courts, the bond would be forfeited to defray firefighting costs.

This would allow public involvement through judicial review but hold opponents accountable. This might lead to a more responsible form of environmentalism.

*Mr. Anderson is president of Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Mont., and a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution*

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