

The Week That Was: 2016-03-05 (March 5, 2016)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *“The more experience and experiments are accumulated during the exploration of nature, the more faltering its theories become.”* Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799) [H/t Volker Marten]

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Number of the Week: 19.2%

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THIS WEEK:

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

Atmospheric Data – Re-Analysis and Confirmation: An issue developed this week that illustrates the importance of proper re-analysis of data and independent confirmation. The issue regarding temperature trends in the middle troposphere was noticed by Anthony Watts, WUWT, discussed in several other posts, with an expanded discussion by Roy Spencer. Spencer and John Christy developed the method of measuring temperatures using data from satellites, for which they received significant recognition. Their findings are publicly posted monthly, with the data going back to December 1978. These data, known as the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) data are the most comprehensive estimates of global temperatures in existence. The group is funded by NOAA.

A private group, publicly and privately funded, is headed by Frank Wentz, with Carl Mears the chief scientist, Remote Sensing Systems (RSS) provides the other well-known analysis. Some years ago, this group discovered that the UAH data, at that time, did not properly account for orbital decay of satellites, giving a cooling bias to the data. Once this bias became known and demonstrated, UAH adjusted for it. This is the way science works, correcting mistakes. Unfortunately, this incident led some global warming promoters to declare that the UAH data is discredited, which it is not.

This week, ahead of print, the Journal of Climate posted an article by Mears and Wentz stating that, in effect, UAH under-estimate global temperature trends. And the fun begins.

At issue are the readings from one satellite, NOAA-14, roughly between 1995 to 2005. Spencer and Christy noticed that this satellite gave higher readings than the prior satellites and the following satellite, NOAA-15. They considered the warming to be spurious and adjusted for in their latest data on the Lower Troposphere and the Middle Troposphere for several reasons. One, the new Advanced Microwave Sounding Unit (AMSU) instrumentation on NOAA-15 is far superior to the prior instrumentation. Second, the NOAA-14 satellite orbit was “drifting far beyond any of the other dozen satellites in the record, leading to warming of the instrument itself.”

Further, after Mears made the RSS data available, Christy calculated the level of agreement (variance) of the three satellite data sets (including NOAAv3.0) with eight sets of radiosonde data from weather balloons. The correspondence with the UAH dataset was far better than the other two satellite data sets, with the exception of the balloon dataset showing the greatest warming trend. Also, when Mears and Wentz first submitted their article to another journal for publication,

Christy reviewed it and made certain recommendations, but did not recommend against publication.

All this was available to Mears and Wentz prior to publication in Journal of Climate. Why they treated data from superior instrumentation the same as data from inferior instrumentation on a satellite that was shown to give biased readings is known only to them. But the incident demonstrates the importance of careful reanalysis and independent confirmation of instrument data. See links under Challenging the Orthodoxy and Measurement Issues – Atmosphere.

UAH Atmospheric Data Discredited? As stated above, some global warming promoters claim UAH atmospheric data are discredited, even though UAH made the necessary adjustments decades ago. The atmospheric data used in the brief filed by some scientists in support of petitioners opposing the Administration's power plan is for the Lower Troposphere (surface to 18 km (59,000 feet)). The data show no statistically significant trends, positive or negative, exist between 1979 to 2011. Further, the data show no tropical hot spot (an atmospheric warming trend centered at about 33,000 feet, 10km) with more a pronounced warming trend than surface warming trend. The Mears and Wentz study is for the middle troposphere, not the lower troposphere (there is some overlap). It will be interesting to see if they publish one for the lower troposphere and if they test their ideas against radiosonde data from weather balloons.

In the context of atmospheric data, the new paper needs to be considered. In the context of the prevailing theory of the influence of carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations on the earth's temperatures, it is less important. Since the 1979 Charney report, the prevailing concept is that a doubling of CO₂ will result in an increase in the earth's temperatures in the range 1.5 ° C to 4.5 ° C or a range of estimates of 3 ° C.

As of now, the trend for RSS is 0.129 ° C per decade and for UAH 0.072 ° C per decade. The difference equals 0.057 ° C per decade over the satellite record. Given the wide range of estimates being advanced by the Climate Establishment, a difference between UAH and RSS estimates of 0.57 ° C per century is not particularly significant. Using this difference to claim the UAH data discredited is akin to claiming a bump on the rump of an elephant discredits the elephant's existence.

[It should be noted that the 2007 Fourth Assessment Report (AR-4) of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had the estimate of warming at 2.0 ° C to 4.5 ° C. This report was current in the 2009 EPA finding that greenhouse gas emissions, primarily CO₂, endanger public health and welfare (Endangerment Finding). The Fifth Assessment Report (AR-5) in 2013 went back to 1.5 ° C to 4.5 ° C. So the IPCC partially undermined the EPA Endangerment Finding.

SEPP thinks that the lower bound (from a doubling of CO₂) is far too high. Based on observations and recent research it should be no more than 1 ° C, or significantly less. Of course, such an estimate would render meaningless the bureaucratic science being performed on the social costs of carbon by certain government entities, such as the US Global Change Research Program. See Measurement Issues – Atmosphere and the February 27 TWTW at SEPP.org.

El Niño Influence: For some time, Roy Spencer, and others, have suggested that the current strong El Niño may increase atmospheric temperatures, showing that these data are influenced by events other than CO₂ concentrations, including weather events and volcanoes. Spencer reports that this February is the warmest since full-year satellite measurements began in 1979. It should

be remembered that the IPCC, and others, consider El Niños to be weather events, not climate events. Even the concept that frequent El Niños influence climate was not accepted by the IPCC.

Not systematically discovering the causes of El Niños, which result in warming, and La Niñas, which result in cooling, is a major deficiency in the funding of climate science by government entities. The emphasis on only human factors is greatly misplaced. Among other private researchers, Bob Tisdale has asserted that El Niños result from a lessening of the trade winds in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, resulting in a lessening of the overturning of the ocean and a warming of the surface water.

For months, private groups and government entities have been forecasting that this 2015-16 El Niño is a strong one. Also, some private groups, such as Weatherbell Analytics, have been stating that the current El Niño is significantly different than the 1997-98 El Niño. It is centered further westward, towards the central equatorial Pacific, rather than in the eastern Pacific, off the coast of Peru. The different location results in different weather patterns, particularly in the Americas.

As linked in last week's TWTW, NASA finally recognized that the current El Niño is different than the 1997-98 one, and NOAA forecasts that it will fade quickly and be replaced by a strong La Niña this year.

The real question is what will happen after the La Niña. Will the temperatures roughly stabilize for a number of years, as in the past? Will the level be roughly the same as before, or will it be higher, as happened after the 1997-98 El Niño. Unfortunately, these unknowns are among the many problems in climate science.

RICO: Starting about September 2015, some academics at George Mason University (in Virginia) were urging members of Congress to begin investigations under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) against those who question the Climate Establishment that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming.

Now, another member of Congress, Lamar Smith, is suggesting that at least one of the academics and his wife received compensation for full-time employment from federal grants while he received compensation for full-time employment at George Mason University. This practice is known as "double-dipping" and may be illegal. Given that the Justice Department refused to investigate Peter Gleick for pretending to be as a member of the Board of Directors of the Heartland Institute in order to obtain privileged documents, it is questionable if the Justice Department will investigate. But if Lamar Smith prevails, it will be interesting to see if the colleagues of this academic claim that he is protected by academic freedom.

Also, are these colleagues still expecting great windfalls in possible RICO cases from suing private companies for not spreading climate alarm? See link under Suppressing Scientific Inquiry – The Witch Hunt – Push-Back and Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Energy Security: On Climate Etc., Evan Hillebrand has an interesting discussion on energy security. All too often, such concepts are confused by secondary concepts such as energy independence or sustainability. As with other commodities, in themselves, energy imports are neither good or bad, as long as the imports are reliable. Also, the concept of sustainability opens up a host of issues for speculation. Eight years ago, who would have proclaimed that oil and

natural gas production in the US was sustainable for the foreseeable future – except those few who were advocating increased drilling? See link under Seeking a Common Ground.

A Noble Experiment? On his web site, Energy Matters, Euan Mears (not Carl Mears) has been tracking an experiment on El Hierro, one of the Canary Islands, to make the island energy independent with 100% renewable electricity, with a combination of wind power and pumped hydro storage. With a round-trip loss of about 30%, or more, of the electricity that goes into pumping water uphill, pumped hydro storage is the only method used on a commercial scale to store excess electricity for future use. It is used in Denmark, with the pumped hydro in Norway and Sweden, and in the US, with the largest facility in Virginia. For El Hierro, the system had an installed wind capacity of more than twice the peak demand. The ultimate back-up was diesel.

In a lengthy, somewhat technical post, Mearns discusses the experiment after eight months of operation. About 32% of the electricity delivered was renewable (wind and pumped storage). About 68% was diesel. Under prolonged windy conditions the renewable system delivered only about 50% of the electricity. Those promoting wind power, especially politicians, should be forced to address the limited reliability of wind power. See link under Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind -- Reliability

Additions and Corrections: Australian Des Moore asked if the Supreme Court decision to “stay” EPA actions on the Administration’s power plan would impact on other regulations on CO₂, and will the Administration fulfill its promises in the Paris Accord?

To which we responded, from our reading, the unusual stay applies only to the Administration’s “Clean Power Plan”, which would have forced states to develop plans in order to reduce CO₂ emissions. The plan applies to existing stationary sources and largely to coal-fired power plants.

This does not prevent the EPA from inventing additional regulations, but if such regulations apply to CO₂ emissions, the EPA will be in a legal thicket.

The commitment to the Paris agreement is that of the Administration alone, not of the nation. It is based on the Administration’s power plan, which has been suspended, indefinitely. The Administration has ignored the role of Congress. There is little reason to assume it will obtain the support of Congress at this late date.

Number of the Week 19.2%, compounded annually. Some promoters of global warming/climate change are demanding that insurers and other companies inform their stockholders of the risks of climate change. In the 2015 annual report, Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. did so. His comments include:

“Up to now, climate change has not produced more frequent nor more costly hurricanes nor other weather-related events covered by insurance. As a consequence, U.S. super-cat rates have fallen steadily in recent years, which is why we have backed away from that business. If super-cats become costlier and more frequent, the likely—though far from certain—effect on Berkshire’s insurance business would be to make it larger and more profitable.”

“As a citizen, you may understandably find climate change keeping you up nights. As a homeowner in a low-lying area, you may wish to consider moving. But when you are thinking only as a shareholder of a major insurer, climate change should not be on your list of worries.”

Berkshire Hathaway is the largest shareholder in Munich Re, the world's largest re-insurance company. Annually, Munich Re promptly produces reports of losses, both insured and estimated non-insured, for the previous year, which are linked in TWTW. There are no skyrocketing losses.

Berkshire Hathaway's annual report stated that the Compounded Annual Gain for the stockholders, 1965-2015, is 19.2%. Claiming that the stockholders are being misled by not stating the risks of climate change is absurd. See links under Questioning the Orthodoxy.

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ARTICLES: The Articles section is now at the bottom of TWTW.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry – The Witch Hunt – Push-Back

Congressman Says Illicit Payments for Scientist Behind Climate RICO Push

GMU meteorologist accused of 'double dipping'

By Lachian Markay, Washington Free Beacon, Mar 2, 2016 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/congressman-alleges-illicit-payments-for-scientist-behind-climate-rico-push/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy -- NIPCC

Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming

The NIPCC Report on the Scientific Consensus

By Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer, NIPCC, Nov 23, 2015

<http://climatechangereconsidered.org/>

Download with no charge

<https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/why-scientists-disagree-about-global-warming>

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Physical Science

Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2013

<https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-II/CCR-II-Full.pdf>

Summary: <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2a/pdf/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts

Idso, Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2014

<http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2b/pdf/Full-Report.pdf>

Summary: <https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-IIb/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Comments on New RSS v4 Pause-Busting Global Temperature Dataset

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2016/03/comments-on-new-rss-v4-pause-busting-global-temperature-dataset/>

Melanie Phillips: Science Is Turning Back To The Dark Ages

By Melanie Phillips, The Times, Via GWPF, Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/melanie-phillips-science-is-turning-back-to-the-dark-ages/>

The Current State of Climate Alarmism

By Ari Halperin, American Thinker, Feb 29, 2016

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2016/02/the_current_state_of_climate_alarmism.html

The Complicity of Journals and Magazines in Pushing Flawed IPCC Climate Science

Guest opinion: Dr. Tim Ball, WUWT, Feb 28, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/02/28/the-complicity-of-journals-and-magazines-in-pushing-flawed-ipcc-climate-science/>

The Inconvenient Facts the Media Ignore About Climate Change

By Rep. Lamar Smith, The Daily Signal, Feb 26, 2016 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://dailysignal.com/2016/02/26/the-inconvenient-facts-the-media-ignores-about-climate-change/>

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Reality Check: Warren Buffett Says Climate Change No Risk To Berkshire Hathaway

By Stephen Foley, Financial Times, Via GWPF, Feb 29, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/reality-check-warren-buffett-says-climate-change-no-risk-to-berkshire-hathaway/>

Link to Annual Report (with letter): Berkshire Hathaway Inc. 2015 Annual Report

By Warren Buffett, Berkshire Hathaway, 2015

<http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/2015ar/2015ar.pdf>

Compounded Annual Gain – 1965-2015 – 19.2%

You Ought to Have a Look: Paris Climate Agreement, Clean Power Plan, Canadian Carbon Taxes, and New Science

By Patrick J. Michaels and Paul C. "Chip" Knappenberger, Cato, Mar 3, 2016

<http://www.cato.org/blog/you-ought-have-look-paris-climate-agreement-clean-power-plan-canadian-carbon-taxes-new-science>

Ozone does not necessarily promote decline of natural ecosystems

By Staff Writers, Charlottesville VA (SPX), Feb 29, 2016

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Ozone_does_not_necessarily_promote_decline_of_natural_ecosystems_999.html

“They found that ozone changes the relative abundances of tree species, but that overall ecosystem productivity - the rate of biomass generation - and the ability of the ecosystem to store carbon do not change in the face of ozone pollution.”

The Kevin Trenberth Effect: Pulling Science Back to the Dark Ages. Part two – The Big Snow Job

Guest essay by Jim Steele, WUWT, Feb 29, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/02/29/the-kevin-trenberth-effect-pulling-science-back-to-the-dark-ages-part-two-the-big-snow-job/>

Bayesian parameter estimation: Radiocarbon dating re-examined

A guest article by Nic Lewis, Climate Audit, Mar 2, 2016

<http://climateaudit.org/2016/03/02/bayesian-parameter-estimation-radiocarbon-dating-re-examined/#more-21834>

[SEPP Comment: A technical essay.]

After Paris!

A Hollow Treaty

The EU Can't Keep Its Climate Promises

By Staff Writers, The American Interest, Mar 1, 2016

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/03/01/the-eu-cant-keep-its-climate-promises/>

EU Won't Reach Its Carbon Goals, It's Just Another Climate Hypocrite

Editorial IBD, Mar 1, 2016 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.investors.com/politics/editorials/eu-wont-reach-its-carbon-goals-its-just-another-climate-hypocrite/>

China issues 210 coal plant licences despite pollution woes

Plants approved because of economy's emphasis on infrastructure investments

By Clifford Coonan, The Irish Times, Mar 2, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/china-issues-210-coal-plant-licences-despite-pollution-woes-1.2556912>

“China issued 210 licences [British spelling] for new coal-fired power plants last year despite the central government repeatedly sounding the alarm on overcapacity, Greenpeace said.”

[SEPP Comment: Is this the same Greenpeace that claimed the draft of the Paris climate agreement represents the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era?]

How the US just undermined India's local solar energy program

The World Trade Organization dealt a damaging blow to India's solar panel industry Wednesday, and it's all thanks to legality complaints from the US.

By Story Hinkley, Christian Science Monitor, Feb 25, 2016 [H/t Climate Etc.]

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2016/0225/How-the-US-just-undermined-India-s-local-solar-energy-program?cmpid=TW>

“In their report, the WTO says they looked at India's situation through a larger environmental lens but still can't find necessary or essential justification. WTO law trumps UNFCCC agreements, ruled the organization.”

The Administration's Plan

ARPA-E's Williams discusses role of innovative technologies in meeting Paris pledge

Transcript by Staff Writers, Feb 23, 2016

<http://www.eenews.net/tv/videos/2098/transcript>

[SEPP Comment: Not much substance from the head of the US Department of Energy's task force to create energy break-throughs.]

The Administration's Plan – Independent Analysis

New Reports Say CPP and Renewable Tax Credits Have Big Implications for the Power Sector

By Bentham Paulos, Power Mag, Feb 26, 2016

http://www.powermag.com/new-reports-say-cpp-and-renewable-tax-credits-have-big-implications-for-the-power-sector/?hq_e=el&hq_m=3219643&hq_l=13&hq_v=5e660500d0

Link to one report: What Happens to Renewable Energy Without the Clean Power Plan?

By Larsen, Herndon, and Larsen, Rhodium, Feb 25, 2016

<http://rhg.com/notes/renewable-energy-without-the-clean-power-plan>

Link to second report: NREL analysis finds tax credit extensions can impact renewable energy deployment and electric sector CO2 emissions

By Staff Writers, NREL, Department of Energy, Feb 22, 2016

<http://www.nrel.gov/news/press/2016/22645>

From NREL report: “The report, Impacts of Federal Tax Credit Extensions on Renewable Deployment and Power Sector Emissions, details the use of state-of-the-art scenario modeling to explore two questions:

- (1) How might renewable energy deployment in the contiguous United States change with these recent federal tax credit extensions?
- (2) How might this change in renewable energy deployment impact CO2 emissions in the power sector?”

The Administration’s Plan – Push-Back

Why Are Some States Still Implementing the Costly ‘Clean Power Plan’?

By Luke Popovich, Breitbart, Feb 26, 2016

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/02/26/why-are-some-states-still-implementing-the-costly-clean-power-plan/>

Seeking a Common Ground

AGU, Exxon and the corporate funding dilemma

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Feb 29, 2016

<https://judithcurry.com/2016/02/29/agu-exxon-and-the-corporate-funding-dilemma/#more-21201>

[SEPP Comment: Many scientists have become very dogmatic: money from government – good; money from private corporations – bad.]

The doctored science of global warming

Fraud in pursuit of politics undermines trust in government everywhere

Editorial, Washington Times, Mar 3, 2016

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/mar/3/editorial-the-doctored-science-of-global-warming/>

What is Energy Security? Definitions and Scenarios

By Evan Hillebrand, Climate Etc. Mar 3, 2016

<https://judithcurry.com/2016/03/03/what-is-energy-security-definitions-and-scenarios/>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by CO2 Science

Great Barrier Reef Corals Creating Their Own Calcifying Fluid pH

Georgiou, L., Falter, J., Trotter, J., Kline, D.I., Holcomb, M., Dove, S.G., Hoegh-Guldberg, O. and McCulloch, M. 2015. pH homeostasis during coral calcification in a free ocean CO2 enrichment (FOCE) experiment, Heron Island reef flat, Great Barrier Reef. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA* 112: 13,219-13,224. Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V19/mar/a4.php>

"this newly discovered phenomenon of pH homeostasis during calcification indicates that coral living in highly dynamic environments exert strong physiological controls on the carbonate chemistry of their calcifying fluid, implying a high degree of resilience to ocean acidification within the investigated ranges."

Ocean Acidification Database

By Staff, CO2 Science, Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.co2science.org/data/acidification/acidification.php>

More Evidence that FACE Studies Underestimate the Positive Impacts of CO2 Enrichment on Plant Growth

Bunce, J.A. 2016. Responses of soybeans and wheat to elevated CO2 in free-air and open top chamber systems. *Field Crops Research* 186: 78-85. Mar 2, 2016
<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V19/mar/a2.php>

Plant Growth Database

By Staff, CO2 Science, Mar 2, 2016
http://www.co2science.org/data/plant_growth/plantgrowth.php

Models v. Observations

Climate Models are NOT Simulating Earth's Climate – Part 3

Guest Post by Bob Tisdale, WUWT, Feb 29, 2016
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/02/29/climate-models-are-not-simulating-earths-climate-part-3/>

Climate Models are NOT Simulating Earth's Climate – Part 4

Guest Post by Bob Tisdale, WUWT, Mar 1, 2016
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/01/climate-models-are-not-simulating-earths-climate-part-4/>

Model Issues

Gerry Browning: In Memory of Professor Heinz Kreiss

The Correct System of Equations for Climate and Weather Models
By Gerry Browning, Climate Audit, Feb 27, 2016
<http://climateaudit.org/2016/02/27/gerry-browning-in-memory-of-professor-heinz-kreiss/>
[SEPP Comment: Technical]

Measurement Issues -- Surface

Persistent Pause Perplexes Climate Catastrophists

By Doug Hoffman, The Resilient Earth, Feb 29, 2016 [H/t GWPF]
<http://www.theresilientearth.com/?q=content/persistent-pause-perplexes-climate-catastrophists>
[SEPP Comment: Another look at Mr. Karl's modification of NOAA's data.]

Measurement Issues -- Atmosphere

The 'Karlization' of global temperature continues – this time RSS makes a massive upwards adjustment

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 2, 2016
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/02/the-karlization-of-global-temperature-continues-this-time-rss-makes-a-massive-upwards-adjustment/>

Link to paper: Sensitivity of satellite-derived tropospheric temperature trends to the diurnal cycle adjustment

By Carl Mears and Frank Wentz, *Journal of Climate*, 2016 [Ahead of print]
<http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/JCLI-D-15-0744.1?af=R>

UAH V6 Global Temperature Update for Feb. 2016: +0.83 deg. C (new record)

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Mar 1, 2016
<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2016/03/uah-v6-global-temperature-update-for-feb-2016-0-83-deg-c-new-record/>

Long Satellite Pauses Ending (Now Includes January Data)

Guest Post by Werner Brozek, Excerpted From Nick Stokes, Edited by Just The Facts: WUWT, Mar 2, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/02/long-satellite-pauses-ending-now-includes-january-data/>

RSS Nobbled [British slang – performance reduced]

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Mar 4, 2016

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/rss-nobbled/#more-20819>

Record Rainy, Cloudy, Humid February over the Oceans

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Mar 2, 2016

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2016/03/record-rainy-cloudy-humid-february-over-the-oceans/>

A new paper in a prestigious journal proves a 15-year hiatus in global warming. Why it is being ignored?

By David Whitehouse, The Spectator, UK, Feb 26, 2016

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/the-global-warming-hiatus-is-real-so-why-dont-we-hear-about-it/>

Link to paper: Making sense of the early-2000s warming slowdown

By Fyfe, et al. Nature Climate Change, Feb 24, 2016

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/v6/n3/full/nclimate2938.html>

“The study of the warming hiatus is cutting-edge climate science not the “settled science” of the greenhouse effect and mankind’s input of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. It is not complicated. The three main global temperature datasets are freely available to anyone and there are many, not just professional climate scientists, who have the scientific and statistical skills to analyse what is after all not a great deal of data.”

[SEPP Comment: Paper discussed in last week’s TWTW.]

Global Temperature Report: Warmest Ever February 2016 driven by El Niño

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 2, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/02/global-temperature-report-warmest-ever-february-2016-driven-by-el-nino/>

Changing Weather

After El Nino, Will The Global Warming Pause Continue?

By Staff Writers, GWPF, Mar 3, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/after-el-nino-will-the-global-warming-pause-continue/>

NASA: Drought in 1998-2012 in Mideast worst in 900 years

By Daniella Cheslow, AP, Mar 3, 2016 [H/t Clyde Spencer]

<http://news.yahoo.com/nasa-drought-1998-2012-mideast-worst-900-years-195548808.html>

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

Another alarmist pillar collapses – Greenland melting due to old soot feedback loops and albedo change – not AGW

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 3, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/03/another-alarmist-pillar-collapses-greenland-melting-due-to-old-soot-feedback-loops-and-albedo-change-not-agw/>

Link to paper: The darkening of the Greenland ice sheet: trends, drivers, and projections (1981–2100)

By Tedesco, et al, The Cryosphere, Marc 3, 2016

<http://www.the-cryosphere.net/10/477/2016/tc-10-477-2016.pdf>

From Abstract: “The negative trend in observed albedo is confined to the regions of the GrIS [Greenland ice sheet] that undergo melting in summer, with the dry-snow zone showing no trend. The period 1981–1996 also showed no statistically significant trend over the whole GrIS.”

Acidic Waters

Scientists ‘Are Exaggerating CO2 Threat To Marine Life’

By Ben Webster, The Times, Via GWPF, Mar 1, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/scientists-are-exaggerating-carbon-threat-to-marine-life/>

Link to paper: Applying organized scepticism to ocean acidification research

By Howard Browman, Journal of Marine Science, Feb/Mar 2016

<https://icesjms.oxfordjournals.org/content/73/3/529.1.full>

From the abstract: “Further, the mechanisms underlying the biological and ecological effects of OA have received little attention in most organismal groups, and some of the key mechanisms (e.g. calcification) are still incompletely understood. For these reasons, the ICES Journal of Marine Science solicited contributions to this special issue. In this introduction, I present a brief overview of the history of research on OA, call for a heightened level of organized (academic) scepticism to be applied to the body of work on OA, and briefly present the 44 contributions that appear in this theme issue. OA research has clearly matured, and is continuing to do so.”

Un-Science or Non-Science?

In grasslands, longer spring growing season offsets higher summer temperatures

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Mar 01, 2016

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/In_grasslands_longer_spring_growing_season_offsets_higher_summer_temperatures_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Did not consider the benefits of enhanced CO2.]

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

Climate Change Predictions: They Will Always Be Wrong

By Kerry Jackson, IBD, Feb 26, 2016

<http://www.investors.com/politics/capital-hill/climate-change-predictions-they-will-always-be-wrong/>

[SEPP Comment: “Always” is too strong.]

Wind Farms Now Come With the Threat of Jail

By Jessica Shankleman, Bloomberg, Mar 2, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-03-03/jail-and-new-fees-threaten-key-european-market-for-wind-turbines>

“Poland’s governing Law and Justice Party is proposing laws that would require new turbines to be situated away from homes, schools and natural reserves at a distance of more than 10-times their height. That would be about 1.5 kilometers (0.9 miles), according to data compiled by Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The law also would subject existing wind farms to audits every two years.”

[SEPP Comment: Set-backs and audits are a threat?]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Climate Change Effects on Weather Are "Potentially Catastrophic," Scientist Says

By Anna Swartz, Yahoo, Feb 26, 2016

<http://news.yahoo.com/climate-change-effects-weather-potentially-183400532.html>

[SEPP Comment: According to Peter Gleick, known to falsely claim the identity of others.]

Huff Post Explains the Insurance Business to Warren Buffett

Guest essay by Eric Worrall, WUWT, Feb 29, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/02/29/huff-post-explains-the-insurance-business-to-warren-buffett/>

Questioning European Green

European Subsidies to Chinese Industries

By Staff Writers, GWPF, Feb 28, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/european-subsidies-to-chinese-industries/>

But we don't have wait for this outcome before drawing the fundamental lesson: *When two planned economies come into conflict, it is the more conceited bureaucracy that is likely to fail.*

Households face higher energy bills under new plan to keep the lights on

Annual energy bill levy to prevent blackouts could rise from £10 to £20 to fund higher subsidies for coal, gas and nuclear power plants

By Emily Gosden, Telegraph, UK, Mar 1, 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/12179216/Households-face-higher-energy-bills-under-new-plan-to-keep-the-lights-on.html>

Shale: The Unfinished Revolution

By Nick Butler, Financial Times, Feb 29, 2016

<http://www.thegwpf.com/shale-the-unfinished-revolution/>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Government Promotion of “Green” Energy Has Now Become Even More Hopeless

By Alan Carlin, Carlin Economics and Science, Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.carlineconomics.com/archives/2575>

“Before government intervenes in any market there needs to be a clear justification based on whether there is a real market failure to be corrected and whether the benefits of regulation clearly exceed the costs. Promoting “green” energy ideology is not such a justification.”

Green Energy Can't Compete With \$30 Oil

Editorial, IBD, Mar 1, 2016 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.investors.com/politics/editorials/green-energy-cant-compete-with-30-oil/>

NRG shifts away from green power after \$6 billion loss

By Jordan Blum, Houston Chronicle, Feb 29, 2016

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/NRG-shifts-away-from-green-power-after-6-billion-6861656.php?t=6436792562438d9cbb&cmpid=twitter-premium>

[SEPP Comment: According to its web site, NRG is an electricity power generation company with over 140 generating plants with a total capacity of about 50,000 MW.]

Non-Green Jobs

High UK energy costs could force steel work overseas, warns boss

Bosses could choose the US or India over South Wales

By Ben Glaze, The Mirror, UK, Mar 2, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/high-uk-energy-costs-could-7480442>

[SEPP Comment: Under the Mirror's "Save Our Steel" campaign]

Funding Issues

Climate change institute shut down

By Finnegan Schick, Yale News, Mar 1, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2016/03/01/climate-change-institute-shut-down/>

[SEPP Comment: Problem solved?]

World Bank to hold \$20 million carbon credit auction

By Susanna Twidale, Reuters, Feb 29, 2016

<http://news.yahoo.com/world-bank-hold-20-million-carbon-credit-auction-145301713--sector.html>

The Political Games Continue

US lawmakers expand probe of climate study

House of Representatives committee expands investigation of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration analysis that refuted global-warming 'hiatus'.

By Jeff Tollefson, Nature, Feb 26, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.nature.com/news/us-lawmakers-expand-probe-of-climate-study-1.19463>

Litigation Issues

U.S. top court denies bid to block mercury air pollution rule

By Valerie Volcovici, Reuters, Mar 3, 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-court-mercury-idUSKCN0W523N>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Taylor at RFF: Don't Assume the Problem, Debate It (why price carbon dioxide?)

By Robert Bradley Jr. Master Resource, Mar 1, 2016

<https://www.masterresource.org/resources-for-the-future-rff/taylor-at-rff-dont-assume-debate-why-price-carbon-dioxide/>

[SEPP Comment: Among the policy questions: "Is climate planning the new central planning for the economy?" Without knowledge of natural variation in climate, the concept of climate planning is purely a bureaucratic exercise.]

A "Carbon Tax" Is a Utopian Fix that Can't Survive Contact with Political Reality

A tax is not obviously simpler or better than regulation

By Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Foundation for Economic Education, Feb 29, 2016 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<https://fee.org/articles/a-carbon-tax-is-unpopular-for-a-really-good-reason/>

[SEPP Comment: But it generates revenues for which governments have an endless hunger.]

How An Oil Tax Might Help U.S. Achieve Energy Independence

By Robert Barone, Forbes, Mar 2, 2016

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2016/03/02/how-an-oil-tax-might-help-u-s-achieve-energy-independence/?ss=energy#613da7f074dd>

[SEPP Comment: Energy independence is not necessarily a more reasonable goal than independence from imports of any commodity. Taxing imports of commodities sufficiently high to prevent imports is not a solid economic policy.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

End fossil fuel subsidies

By Bjorn Lomborg, Boston Globe, Mar 2, 2016

http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/03/02/end-fossil-fuel-subsidies/LzzK4UxeC0J57WskBYeOqL/story.html?s_campaign=email_BG_TodaysHeadline&s_campaign=

“Last month Venezuela increased the price of gas 6,000 percent, the first time the country has raised fuel prices in two decades.”

[SEPP Comment: Will promoters of wind subsidies note this and demand less in subsidies?]

It's All Over: Britain Abolishes Subsidies For Solar Thermal

By Robin Pagnamenta, The Times, Via GWPF, Mar 4, 2016

<http://www.thegwgf.com/britain-abolishes-subsidies-for-solar-thermal/>

[SEPP Comment: Plans to abolish subsidies to households.]

Banner Year For Renewables: Not For Consumers

By Michael Lynch, Forbes, Mar 2, 2016

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelynch/2016/03/02/banner-year-for-renewables-not-for-consumers/?ss=energy#3f8885d97ab2>

“Getting mandates for renewable power enacted is considered a triumph, rather than a sign that the need for mandates demonstrates the inferior quality of the product.”

Oil slump undermines EU's green agenda

Commission tries to steady nerves frazzled by low fossil fuel

By Sara Stefanini, Politico, Feb 29, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.politico.eu/article/oil-decarbonization-eu-bp-spencer-dale-renewable-energy-gas-lng/>

“Conclusion: If fossil fuel prices fall faster than the technology cost of renewables, supporting renewables becomes more and more expensive,” according to one EU analyst. “To drive out these low-cost fossil fuels, we might need to support renewable energy sources for a long time, until technology development makes renewable energy sources cheaper than all the fossil fuels we are not allowed to burn for climate reasons.”

Energy Issues – Non-US

EDF calls for urgent EU electricity market reform

By Staff Writers, WNN, Feb 24, 2016

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/EE-EDF-calls-for-urgent-EU-electricity-market-reform-2402164.html>

[SEPP Comment: A floor price for carbon – to guarantee subsidies for wind or other forms of electricity generation?]

Washington's Control of Energy

IER's Questions for Secretary Jewell Ahead of Budget Hearing

By Staff Writers, IER, Feb 23, 2016

<http://instituteforenergyresearch.org/analysis/iers-questions-for-secretary-jewell-ahead-of-budget-hearing/>

[SEPP Comment: Amusing, but not idle, calculation: if oil production on Federal Lands followed production on State and private lands from 2010 to 2014, the US government would have received a net increase of almost \$20 Billion in royalty revenues.]

ConocoPhillips is first to draw oil from Alaska reserve set aside in 1923

By Staff Writers, AP, Mar 3, 2016

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2016/03/03/conocophillips-is-first-to-draw-oil-from-alaska-reserve-set-aside-in-1923/#38266101=0>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Energy price war spreads to gas as US shale storms global market, stalks Russia

By Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Telegraph, UK, Feb 25, 2016 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/02/25/energy-price-war-spreads-to-gas-as-us-shale-storms-global-market/>

Gas-Fired Generation Pulled Nearly Even with Coal in 2015, EIA Says

By Thomas Overton, Power Mag, Feb 29, 2016

http://www.powermag.com/gas-fired-generation-pulled-nearly-even-with-coal-in-2015-eia-says/?hq_e=el&hq_m=3219643&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

More oil industry spending cuts to hit production outlook: IEA

By Krisztina Than, Reuters, Mar 4, 2016

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-oil-iea-economist-idUKKCN0W612K>

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks, etc. & Consequences

A Brief History of U.S. Coal Ash Since the Kingston Spill

By Sonal Patel, Power Mag, Mar 1, 2016

http://www.powermag.com/a-brief-history-of-u-s-coal-ash-since-the-kingston-spill/?hq_e=el&hq_m=3219643&hq_l=15&hq_v=5e660500d0

Largest methane leak in US history

By Chris Fitch, Geographical, UK, Feb 25, 2016 [H/t Climate Etc.]

<http://geographical.co.uk/nature/climate/item/1566-largest-methane-leak-in-us-history>

[SEPP Comment: Repeats the highly questionable claim that methane is 25 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Crunch time for nuclear

By Martin Livermore, The Scientific Alliance, Mar 4, 2016

<http://scientific-alliance.org/node/982>

Nuclear Fusion Activity

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Mar 1, 2016

<https://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2016/03/01/nuclear-fusion-activity/>

“For 60 years, scientists have been pursuing the dream of low cost energy using nuclear fusion. “While earlier experiments have demonstrated an ability to create the plasma, no design has ever produced more energy than was consumed ... and this has been the nexus of the problem with nuclear fusion.”

Why America Pays More for Nuclear Power

A new study examines what other countries have done to keep costs down, and what could work in the future.

By Julian Spector, City Lab, Feb 25, 2016

<http://www.citylab.com/tech/2016/02/cost-to-built-nuclear-power-plants-around-the-world/470226/>

Link to study: Historical construction costs of global nuclear power reactors

By Lovering, Yip, & Nordhaus, Breakthrough Institute, Energy Policy, April 2019

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421516300106>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Crescent Dunes concentrating solar plant begins producing electricity

By Carol Brotman White, US EIA, Mar 3, 2016

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=25212&src=email>

World’s largest offshore project to spark sector-wide benefits

By Kerry Chamberlain, Wind Energy Update, Feb 29, 2016

http://analysis.windenergyupdate.com/construction/worlds-largest-offshore-project-spark-sector-wide-benefits?utm_campaign=WIN%2002MAR16%20Newsletter%20B.htm&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua

German Medical Doctors Warn Hazards Of Wind Turbine Infrasond Are Very Real, Worse Than First Thought!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 4, 2016

<http://notrickszone.com/2016/03/04/german-medical-doctors-warn-hazards-of-wind-turbine-infrasound-are-very-real-worse-than-first-thought/#sthash.F8r3igto.dpbs>

[SEPP Comment: The issue may be serious, but the phrase in the post, “Worse Than First Thought”, is a bit much.

German Expert: Wind Turbine Infrasond Travels 25 KM...Warns Of Health Hazards...Advises Minimum 5000 Meter Distance!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 3, 2016

<http://notrickszone.com/2016/03/03/german-expert-wind-turbine-infrasound-travels-25-km-warns-of-health-hazards-advises-minimum-5000-meter-distance/#sthash.y8U5WWTq.dpbs>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind -- Reliability

El Hierro, January/February 2016 update:

By Euan Mearns, Energy Matters, Mar 2, 2016

<http://euanmearns.com/el-hierro-januaryfebruary-2016-update/#more-12795>

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

Digester Economics

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Mar 4, 2016

<https://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/digester-economics/>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Vehicles

As oil tanks, this 'new gasoline' is on a tear

By Matt Clinch, CNBC, Mar 1, 2016

<http://www.cnbc.com/2016/03/01/as-oil-tanks-this-new-gasoline-is-on-a-tear.html>

[SEPP Comment: Promoting future success of electricity storage!]

Health, Energy, and Climate

Climate Alarmism on steroids, we are in a “global climate crisis”

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 1, 2016

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/03/01/climate-alarmism-on-steroids-we-are-in-a-global-climate-crisis/>

Death, disease, coming in 2050 says model of model

“Half a million deaths by 2050!”

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Mar 4, 2016

<http://joannenova.com.au/2016/03/death-disease-coming-in-2050-says-model-of-model/>

Link to paper: Global and regional health effects of future food production under climate change: a modelling study

By Springmann, et al. The Lancet, No Date

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2815%2901156-3/abstract>

Funding by Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food.

Latest Nonsense: Climate Change To Lead To Fruit & Veg Shortage

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Mar 3, 2016

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2016/03/03/latest-nonsense-climate-change-to-lead-to-fruit-veg-shortage/#more-20792>

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately above.]

Environmental Industry

Food Is Dangerous Until You Prove It Isn't

By Hank Cambell, ACSH, Feb 3, 2016

<http://acsh.org/news/2016/02/03/food-is-dangerous-until-you-prove-it-isnt/>

How the Columbia Journalism School smeared Exxon

By Jon Entine, New York Post, Mar 1, 2016 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://nypost.com/2016/03/01/how-the-columbia-journalism-school-smeared-exxon/>

No traction for climate change

Tom Steyer's priorities are at odds with America

By Thomas Pyle, Washington Times, Feb 28, 2016

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/feb/28/thomas-pyle-no-traction-for-climate-change/>

Oregon becomes the first US state to vote to go coal free

By Aisling Irwin, New Scientist, Mar 3, 2016

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2079541-oregon-becomes-the-first-us-state-to-vote-to-go-coal-free/?utm_source=NSNS&utm_medium=SOC&utm_campaign=hoot&cmpid=SOC|NSNS|2016-GLOBAL-hoot

[free/?utm_source=NSNS&utm_medium=SOC&utm_campaign=hoot&cmpid=SOC|NSNS|2016-GLOBAL-hoot](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2079541-oregon-becomes-the-first-us-state-to-vote-to-go-coal-free/?utm_source=NSNS&utm_medium=SOC&utm_campaign=hoot&cmpid=SOC|NSNS|2016-GLOBAL-hoot)

“The US state of Oregon has become the first to vote for a complete ban on coal-generated power. By 2035, at the latest, the state's utility companies must ensure none of the electricity they provide comes from coal.

“And, by 2040, at least half of the state's energy must come from renewable resources, under the Clean Energy and Coal Transition Act, voted into law by the country's [state's] legislature yesterday.

“Oregon has only one coal-fired power station, which is already due to shut down in 2020. But it imports one-third of its electricity from coal-fired plants in states of Montana, Utah and Wyoming.”

[SEPP Comment: Oregon depends heavily on hydroelectric power, which Big Green also opposes.]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Missed it by that much!

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Mar 1, 2016

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/5924>

“Last year a series of lakes formed on the vast body of ice that covers most of Greenland. Acting like a lubricant, the water quickly made its way to the base of the ice sheet, forcing giant slabs of ice to rise, then slide into the ocean. The speed at which the ice broke off shocked many scientists.

“We used to think that it would take 10,000 years for melting at the surface of an ice sheet to penetrate down to the bottom. Now we know it doesn’t take 10,000 years; it takes 10 seconds,” says Richard Alley, a professor of geosciences at Pennsylvania State University.”

Sydney Morning Herald, 3 Feb 2007

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ARTICLES:

Please note that articles not linked easily or summarized here are reproduced in the Articles Section of the full TWTW that can be found on the web site under the date of the TWTW.

1. How to Keep Bad Science From Getting Into Print

‘Irreproducible’ research is more often due to error than misconduct or fraud, but fighting it is vital.

By Jeffrey Flier, WSJ, Mar 1, 2016

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-to-keep-bad-science-from-getting-into-print-1456874402>

SUMMARY: The Dean of the Harvard Medical School writes:

“In 2015 more than one million papers in bioscience were published—more than ever before, and reflecting enormous progress in biomedical research. But a growing number of high-profile retractions have led to a widespread belief that the results scientists publish are increasingly irreproducible. The retraction last August of 64 articles by one of the world’s largest academic publishers, Springer, sent shudders through the scientific world. Another example is the retraction in 2010 of a widely cited paper published in Lancet in 1998 claiming a link between vaccines and autism.

“Proper studies to assess the prevalence of irreproducible research don’t exist, but online access to published results allows more widespread scrutiny. The main goal of Retraction Watch, for instance, is to identify and publish such claims. Peer-reviewed publications are the linchpin of medical progress, so concerns about their accuracy must be taken seriously.

“The causes of irreproducible research, much more often due to error than to misconduct or fraud, fall into three main categories. First are deficiencies in how investigators conduct and analyze their studies, including problems in design and statistical analysis. Second are incentives—including career advancement, grant funding and possible financial conflicts of interest—that may tempt investigators to violate good scientific practice.

“A third cause, less commonly discussed, relates to how papers are reviewed and accepted for publication. Scientific journals are the major vehicle for disseminating science, yet there is little active effort to determine how best to deliver research results. In short, we need a science of how to publish science.”

“As gatekeepers, scientific journals can do more to enhance the validity of the work that they publish. For instance, it’s time to consider ending the tradition of journals keeping reviewers anonymous to the authors. Anonymity might protect reviewers from retaliation by disgruntled authors, but it might also promote self-serving or superficial reviews. Reviewer identification should be encouraged if not required.

“With a few notable exceptions, journals don’t publish reviewers’ comments, or editors’ and authors’ responses. Journals should also publish these communications, which would be data for independent research on the quality of the peer-review process.

“Might the sequence between publication and review sometimes be reversed? A movement is gaining steam to encourage pre-posting of bioscience manuscripts online, as is the norm in physics today. The website F1000Research publishes papers online before review and then solicits assessments from a panel of reviewers and/or the wider scientific community. The site also encourages the publication of confirmatory studies, which are vital to scientific progress but of less interest to journals and therefore to scientists.

“More discussion online after publication would be welcome. PubPeer encourages open dialogue between the public and authors, which may bring concerns about papers more quickly to the attention of scientists and publishers. We need research on the benefits and risks of this approach.

“Finally, publishers must move faster to correct mistakes in published papers. The current glacial process allows errors to be propagated for too long.

2. Downstream From a Slippery EPA

In the aftermath of the Gold King spill, the agency is holding itself to a lower standard than polluters.

By Ryan Flynn, New Mexico’s Secretary of Environment, WSJ, Feb 29, 2016

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/downstream-from-a-slippery-epa-1456791558>

SUMMARY: New Mexico’s Secretary of Environment contrasts the EPA public statements with the slow, inept response to the communities affected by EPA’s actions at Colorado’s Gold King mine, which resulted in a major spill into the Animas River on August 5.

“An estimated 880,000 pounds of lead and other metals poured out of the Gold King in August when the Environmental Protection Agency fumbled a construction project and blew out the mine’s plug.”

“From the start, the EPA bungled its response to the spill. The first call alerting New Mexico that contaminated water was on its way didn’t even come from the agency. The water-quality manager of the Southern Ute Tribe, who live in Colorado right on the border with New Mexico, contacted my department with a warning on Aug. 6.

“The New Mexico Environment Department quickly dispatched technical staff to take advance water samples, to establish a water-quality baseline. The Animas River is much more than a kayaking spot or a fishing hole for New Mexicans. The drinking water of eight communities—

about 90,000 people—is drawn directly from the river, which also sustains crops and livestock, and supports thousands of people’s livelihoods.

“After failing to alert New Mexico promptly, the EPA to a large extent left the states and tribes downstream to fend for themselves. No one from the EPA’s regional office in Dallas showed up in New Mexico for nearly a week, by which time the lume had passed. New Mexico’s representative to the EPA’s Incident Command Center in Colorado reported that she was shut out of closed-door meetings where decisions were made.

“When EPA staff did finally arrive in New Mexico on Aug. 9, they were rotated out of the state every few days. This led to redundant briefings and inconsistent execution. One EPA communications officer arrived in New Mexico with no capability to text, email or dispatch photos from the field.

“As the spill wound its way downstream, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy repeatedly went on camera to say that the agency would hold itself to a “higher standard.” Instead it engaged in a careful campaign of minimization and misdirection.

“About two weeks after the spill, the EPA released an environmental standard for the Gold King mine sediment that was an order of magnitude weaker than those applied to other polluters. The agency used a “recreational” standard and suggested that lead in the soil at 20,000 parts per million would be “safe” for campers and hikers. But in New Mexico people live along the Animas, so a “residential” standard would be more appropriate. During a cleanup of a superfund site in Dallas, in the regional EPA office’s own backyard, the standard for lead in the soil was 500 parts per million.

3. U.S. Bid to Prosecute BP Staff in Gulf Oil Spill Falls Flat

Judges dismissed charges related to Deepwater Horizon blowout; tally: 3 misdemeanors
By Aruna Viswanatha, WSJ, Feb 27, 2016

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-bid-to-prosecute-bp-staff-in-gulf-oil-spill-falls-flat-1456532116>

SUMMARY: The Justice Department has failed in its effort to successfully prosecute those responsible for the 2010 BP blow-out in the Gulf of Mexico. According to the reporter:

“A critical moment in the government’s case against Robert Kaluza, who was facing a criminal charge for his role in the 2010 BP PLC oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, came when a former colleague was called to testify.

“Donald Vidrine had already pleaded guilty and was expected to bolster prosecutors’ arguments. But he had trouble articulating exactly what he—and by extension Mr. Kaluza—may have done wrong. “I, we, uh, I may not have, I probably didn’t press hard enough,” the Louisiana native told a federal jury in New Orleans last week, after a long pause. “I thought I had.”

“Late Thursday, a jury took less than two hours to find Mr. Kaluza not guilty of the charge he had ignored warning signs leading to the explosion.

“It was an ignominious end to the final case in the government’s effort to find individuals criminally responsible for the blowout on the Deepwater Horizon. In the four years since the U.S. began its cases against five men, prosecutors withdrew 23 counts before trial, judges dismissed 23 others and jurors acquitted on three counts. The three guilty pleas the government secured were all misdemeanors, and the men received or will likely receive probation.

“The outcome, stemming from the largest oil spill off the U.S. coast, in which 11 people died and more than three million barrels of oil poured into the Gulf, is a reminder how hard it is to find individuals culpable for catastrophes where companies were held responsible.”

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