

The Grouse House Gazette

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Thoughts and Observations on Music, Nature, and Politics, from the Catskill Mountains

THE ENVIRONMENT & THE BROWNING OF AMERICA

HAPPY EARTH DAY EVERYONE... UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS STILL THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OF OUR TIME

Much of this Gazette's research is from an earlier one I wrote years ago... of which I have always been very proud... but few read it... it was early in my mailings... and I thought that with this being "Earth Day" that I should fire it out into the universe once again... some updating where needed.

The "deniers" have no place to hide here. ENJOY! GH

For the past few elections... a disbelief in Climate Science seems to have increased in importance as a litmus test for any GOP Presidential candidates... as the party has drifted further and further to the radical right.

The standard "catch phrase" whenever a Republican is near a microphone is... "I'm not a scientist"... as if you can't also ask them about war because they aren't a Pentagon General. Ridiculous answers from people who absolutely usually DO KNOW that Climate Change is real. But of course some idiots like Senator Inhofe from Oklahoma do seem totally "brain dead" at this point on the issue... as his ["carbon bucks" continue to roll in](#).

So even though 97% of climate scientists believe in Climate Change... the GOP CAN'T believe in it...

What next? Having to believe in Santa Claus?

The party of Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan has now officially become the "anti-science" party and protecting the environment has become a decidedly UN-Republican, "liberal" issue.

But this was not always the case.

Republican Abraham Lincoln was possibly our first "environmental" President as he created the Department of Agriculture in 1862 and also passed a bill protecting

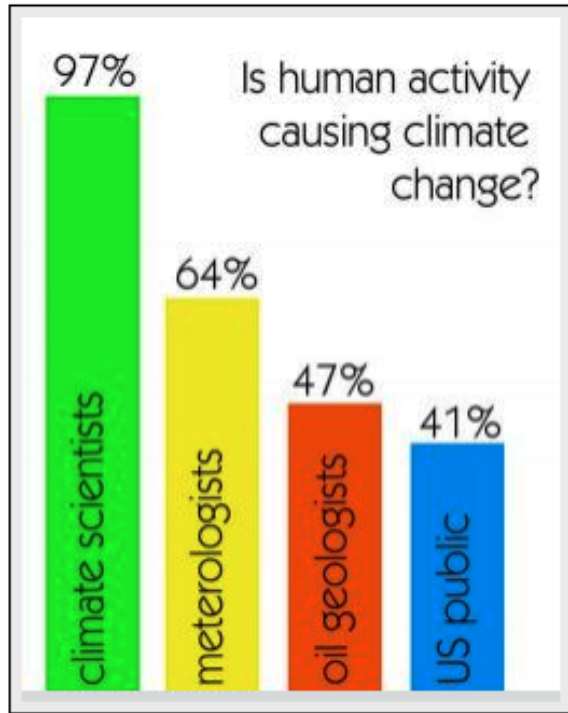


the Yosemite Valley in 1864. All while fighting the Civil War and freeing the slaves!

Republican Teddy Roosevelt created the National Wildlife Refuge System that placed 230 million acres of land under federal protection in 1903 and set the stage for the future national parks system created by **Democrat** Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

Republican Richard Nixon actually goes down in history as possibly the most effective environmental president of all time. In 1970 he signed the Clean Air Act while also establishing the Environmental Protection Agency (which is so hated today by the inheritors of his party).

In 1972, Nixon passed the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Ocean Dumping Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Federal Insecticide Act, and the Toxic Substances Control Act. In 1973, he passed the Endangered Species Act and in 1974, he went on to pass the Safe Drinking Water Act. The first "earth day" was also celebrated under the Nixon presidency. All while fighting Watergate prosecution!



Republican Ronald Reagan used the now dreaded "Cap and Trade" concept in his presidency to end the damaging effects of "acid rain" in the eastern United States and Canada (caused primarily by coal-fired CO² emitting power plants).

And as recently as 2010... former GOP Presidential candidate **Republican** Newt Gingrich made a television spot with **Democrat** Nancy Pelosi clearly stating his belief in climate change and it's URGENT importance. [CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#)

Newt's relatively recent action is an anomaly that reflects his being caught in an odd twenty-year political "time-warp" where he helplessly still believed he is living in the nineties. It seems he "didn't get the memo"!

And he lost badly...

I don't think anyone would DARE call Nixon, Reagan, or Gingrich, "LIBERALS" today.

Which is exactly my point and the reason for this piece.

How did such a political seismic shift occur after such stellar GOP environmental initiatives in the past?

Conservation and the protection of the environment were once seen as "American" issues... whereas now they are seen as political ones.

During the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush years, moneyed special interests swung the Republican Party under the influence of what author Naomi Oreskes calls "[Merchants of Doubt](#)" (in her book of the same title) who manipulated environmental issues in much the same way that similar forces had previously done for the tobacco industry. There was a time when well paid "scientists" and lobbyists constructed and manipulated the belief that there were no health risks from smoking just as similar individuals today have manipulated beliefs surrounding the environment; which has resulted in our current situation where extremely partisan politics have replaced scientific reasoning to the point that conservatives are EXPECTED not to believe in man-made climate change or even the concept of the conservation of valuable resources.

And with a GLUT in world oil at the moment... and prices so low that they can't support U.S. production... Sarah Palin is STILL.... at a Trump Rally... shouting...

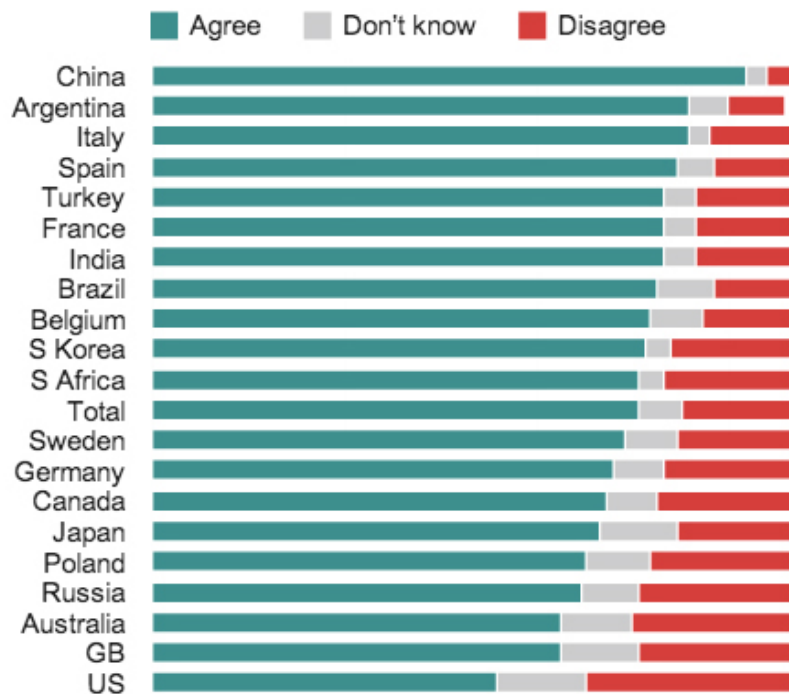
"DRILL BABY DRILL!"

Once I was driving with a conservative friend of mine and we pulled up behind a Prius that had a "Support the Troops" sticker on the back window. He amusingly remarked... "That's an odd sticker for the back of a Prius"... As if anyone conserving fossil fuels could not possibly take the position of supporting the troops fighting and dying to protect America's channels through which that same fuel was being delivered. We have now unfortunately become a nation where political positions now dictate beliefs far beyond the voting booth.

These political manipulations, combined with a fear of the unknown, and a strong resistance to "change", have today resulted in a majority of Americans not believing that man is the cause of the earth's rapidly increasing climate change.

A 2009 survey of "earth scientists" by the University of Illinois revealed that although 97% of the climatic scientists in America believe that man is responsible for climate change, only 41% of Americans believe it true.

To what extent do you agree or disagree? The climate change we are currently seeing is largely the result of human activity



Graphic credit: Ipsos MORI

In 2011 a study by the Pew Research Center of major industrialized countries shows only Russia and China having a smaller percentage of their citizens believing that climate change is an important issue. But the chart above shows the percentages of the population that believe in climate change country.

Why are we at the bottom of the list?

Beyond the obvious success of moneyed, special-interest lobbying... and powerful media outlets such as Fox News and right wing radio... Americans have also been numbed into complacency by steady streams of viral emails and questionable "facts" spread online.

As an example... You may have gotten emails claiming that the Icelandic volcanoes have actually expelled more CO² and done more damage to the atmosphere, than all of mankind's emissions within the past century. The truth however, is that the carbon "offset" by the cancelled European flights actually negated most of the effects completely. [CLICK HERE FOR THE TRUTH LINK:](#)

Of the two leading sites that I could find dedicated to the denial of climate change... one is run by two computer programmers... and the other by a freelance journalist whose other writings include a book explaining how the death penalty fits in perfectly to Christian religious beliefs. So right wing politically motivated "merchants of doubt" of the highest order run the sites. Not scientists.

But I also blame Al Gore... For simply BEING Al Gore.

After the contested election in the year 2000, when Gore turned to devoting his life to environmental issues, he unfortunately also became a polarizing lightning rod for those on the right taking up defensive positions against ANYTHING that appeared to be connected to the Democratic Party or the liberal left. Although he has had the best of intentions, and I certainly salute the work that he has done, his past political stature has helped push the increasingly conservative Republican party toward their current "bunker mentality" of opposing conservation and environmental issues.... which they had previously supported.... Which of course, marries nicely with their need to appease their campaign-

contributing carbon-driven industrial base whose conflicts of interests are obvious.

Conservatives today are always quick to play a variety of predictable cards when confronted with environmental issues. Usually these include phrases like "bad science" and the ever-popular, non-issue of the so-called "climate-gate" email scandal. (Which is complete bullshit... [CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#))

And, of course, they usually throw in the bit about the Icelandic volcanoes as well as "facts" about how previous periods of warming and cooling prove that man is not to blame (which is also total and complete bullshit...[CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#))

Their most ridiculous and certainly most ignorant argument is the one that belittles the term "global warming" as skeptics point out our recent cold winters and record snowfalls as "proof" that the earth is not "warming". Our current urgent situation would be better described as "Global Weirdness" and I have been careful NOT to use the "global warming" term in this article. The earth's "warming" is resulting in far reaching disruptions in every day "weather" patterns ranging from more powerful hurricanes, to droughts, flooding, and record-breaking snowfalls caused by an increase of moisture in the air from evaporating seawater.

Fox News ridiculed a competing newscaster for DARING to make a statement that a recent outbreak of WINTER tornadoes could possibly be related to climate change.

After all... haven't tornadoes always happened?

But when you take these odd WINTER tornadoes... alongside progressively more powerful hurricanes, unprecedented wildfires in Texas, the Southwest, and Australia, record breaking snowfalls in America and Europe, record breaking floods in Texas and the middle South... as well as Pakistan, Europe, and Australia... it does all start to add up together. Global Weirdness!

The results of climate change are starting to be seen in the devastation of crops in Europe, Russia, and Africa as well as changes in animal migrations around the globe. Yemen recently became the first country to literally run out of water.

As droughts increase and rainfall patterns shift, wars in the future will more likely be fought over food and water than energy resources. Our Defense Department considers global warming a national security issue.

[CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#)

There is also the issue of the polar icecaps and glaciers now melting at a much more rapid pace than previously believed with scientists now expecting an increase in sea level of between three and five feet by the end of the century. [CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#)

With almost all of the planet's great cities on or near the ocean this will have an understandably monumental effect on the future. And unfortunately things are getting even worse as a recent report shows CONTINUOUSLY growing amounts of CO² being released into the world's atmosphere. It is rapidly getting much worse.

It is frequently said that "all politics are local", and although our national political leaders may be stuck in a downward spiral of partisan bickering, it is interesting that at the LOCAL level many are beginning to act.

The city of Chicago is actively planning building projects that reflect recommendations of scientists based on a future climate more similar to the Gulf Coast than to Northern Illinois. The city of New York is concerned about future tides swamping the low-lying areas of the city (like the West Side Highway and the FDR expressway) and shipping companies and the United States Navy are planning for a future which will soon include shipping routes through a new "sea" to the north of North America as the polar ice cap melts.

[CLICK HERE FOR TRUTH LINK:](#)

It is far beyond time for Americans to get our heads out of the sand and begin actively taking initiatives in our own lives to make a difference. Our futures and our very existence on earth could well depend on it.

There is simply NOTHING more important than this issue today.

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