

The Week That Was: 2011-06-11 (June 11, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: www.sepp.org.

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Restoring the Scientific Method is the theme of the Sixth International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC-6), Sponsored by the Heartland Institute. It will take place in Washington, DC from breakfast Thursday, June 30, to noon Friday, July 1, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. This event will be more modest than in the past, yet as informative and, perhaps, even more challenging to the orthodoxy. The principal speakers include S. Fred Singer, Craig Idso, and Bob Carter – all major contributors to the NIPCC reports. Of course, SEPP is a co-sponsor. <http://www.heartland.org/events/iccc2011>

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Quote of the Week:

“... and my error has been a good lesson to me never to trust in science to the principle of exclusion.”
The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, p 15 [H/t Paul Macrae]

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Number of the Week: 2006

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THIS WEEK:

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

Climategate exposed more than just the actions of some authors to suppress the scientific data that contradicted the central purpose of their scientific article, as reprehensible as that was. Climategate also exposed how some scientists could, or thought they could, manipulate editors of scientific journals to suppress articles reporting research that contradicted their views.

It appears that the actions exposed by Climategate continue with editors of some scientific journals, including the Proceedings of the (US) National Academy of Sciences. The Proceedings serves as a convenient means for fellows of the Academy to publish papers without a torturous peer review process. Usually, fellows submitting papers recommend two peer reviewers.

Richard Lindzen, a fellow of the Academy, reports how the editors of the Proceedings have subjected him to a long process and refused to consider his recommended peer reviewers, even though they met all the published requirements. Instead the editors rejected the suggested reviewers, including noted physicist Will Happer, and are insisting that Lindzen’s paper be reviewed by members who are openly hostile to his views, as some of the proposed reviewers demonstrated in the Climategate emails.

Lindzen provided details of the exchanges to Chip Knappenberger who published in the blog, *Master Resource*. Steve McIntyre has made comments on the events. Please see articles referenced under “Climategate Continued.”

Fear of Famine: The general public in many western countries is becoming less moved by the shrilled headlines of the terrible consequences from global warming. At Copenhagen, in 2009, the international orthodoxy promised developing countries a goal of \$100 Billion per year as payments for global warming. The poor economic performance in the western countries makes taxpayers less likely to freely acquiesce to the grandiose promises. Thus, a new crisis must be invented. It appears that the new crisis is that global warming, caused by human emissions of carbon dioxide, will cause massive famine in the tropics by shortening the growing season. Apparently, at higher temperatures photosynthesis shuts down, or at least slows down.

A first effort was discussed in the May 14 TWTW in which a study published in *Science* claiming declining production of the four major food crops failed to explain the increasing production of these crops by the world's largest producers. A second report entitled "Is the food production system broken?" by Oxfam, a charity in Britain, was ably dismissed by Martin Livermore of The Scientific Alliance in an article referenced in last week's TWTW.

Last Sunday, the New York Times published a lengthy, front page article by Justin Gillis entitled "A Warming Planet Struggles to Feed Itself." Roger Pielke, Jr, who believes in significant human-cause global warming, demolished this article on his web site. Possibly to defend himself, Gillis sent Pielke a 2009 UN report by Fischer, et al, entitled "Can Technology Deliver on the Yield Challenge to 2050?"

Gillis suggesting the Fischer report is particularly strange because the report concludes that, cautiously optimistically, YES, technology can deliver the yield challenge to 2050. The authors examined, among other issues, changing technology and the failure of adopting the green revolution in sub-Sahara Africa. During this week, SEPP also reviewed another UN alarmist report by Ulrich Hoffman.

SEPP will leave to others the task of discussing the physiology of food crops and if the growing season in the tropics will be shortened by higher temperatures. However, the alarmist studies reviewed by SEPP embody three major errors.

One, all the studies use projections of ever increasing temperatures from models that have never been validated. Thus, analysis of the results of these models, no matter how detailed or rigorous, is little more than speculation.

Two, the models failed to project the planet not warming. Both the surface data from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) and satellite data from the University of Alabama, Huntsville (UAH) show little or no warming since 1998.

Three, the thirty plus year satellite record shows that warming is largely in the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere with little or no warming in the tropics. These observations contradict the assumption of strong warming in the tropics.

There is an interesting point in the cautiously optimistic report by Fischer, et al. The authors place two limiting factors on increasing production of critical food grains: fossil fuels needed both for equipment and fertilizer, and phosphorus needed for fertilizer. Interestingly, the authors use Hubbert's Peak curve to estimate future supplies of phosphorus. The Hubbert's Peak curve was developed to estimate future supplies of oil (and gas) which Hubbert insisted would be soon exhausted. Changes in technology and economics have made the limits of fossil fuels and the Hubbert's Peak curve highly questionable.

Hunger remains a problem in much of the world, but to have charities and international organizations wasting resources in claiming global warming from fossil fuel use will intensify famine is worse than just a waste of resources, it promotes a continued misallocation of resources. Please see referenced articles under "Fear of Famine" and "Models v. Data."

Principle of Exclusion: The excellent web site of Anthony Watts, Watts Up With That, contained an notable post by Paul Macrae on the principle of exclusion, from which the quote of the week was obtained. The principle of exclusion was one of many 19th century efforts to establish that scientific knowledge can be acquired by deduction alone, without observation. Simply put, if one asserts that there are only two possible causes of C, namely A and B; then, if one eliminates A as a possible cause of C, one

must conclude B causes C. The fallacy is that one assumes he has complete knowledge of all the possible causes of C.

Such is the case of the UN IPCC in its 2007 Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). According to the methodology as stated: all the known natural causes “A” of temperature change “C” are calculated, thus all the remaining influences must be human caused, “B.” This methodology assumes all the natural causes of temperature change are known to the IPCC and delineated, which they are not. For example, El Niños are dismissed as being too short in duration to cause temperature trends, but frequency of El Niños may be very important.

At least, authors of the main body of AR4 state that many of the possible natural causes for temperature changes are poorly understood. The authors of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) included only one possible natural cause – changes in solar irradiance. Thus, the authors of the SPM greatly misled those the SPM was designed to influence, policymakers – and the public. Please see Macrae’s post referenced under “Challenging the Orthodoxy.”

Keystone Pipeline: Last week’s TWTW discussed the TransCanada pipelines called Keystone. Due to small leaks, the US Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) shut down the Keystone 590,000 barrels per day pipeline for having eleven small leaks in its eleven months of operation, the last one was 10 barrels that is easily removed. Apparently, the regulating agency, PHMSA, is satisfied with the rapid response of the owner, TransCanada, in reporting and cleaning up any spills and, on Sunday, allowed the pipeline to resume operations after a week of closure.

A major political and environmental fight remains over a second TransCanada pipeline, Keystone XL. This \$7 Billion privately funded project is designed to carry about 900,000 barrels per day, following a different route, from the Alberta, Canada, tar sands to tie into the existing pipeline near the Kansas-Nebraska border, and then to continue to refineries in Texas. These refineries are among the few in the world that can process the heavy crude from Venezuela, which ships its crude oil to the US for refining.

The leader of Venezuela expresses contempt for the US, but the state-owned oil company must refine its crude in the US and the US is its major retail outlet. Since the new Keystone XL crosses international boundaries, the US State Department claims it must approve it. The play of international politics may be fascinating, but not the subject of TWTW. The play of environmental policy is.

Among those organizations insisting that they should influence this international decision by the State Department are the EPA, and many environmental groups, including, the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC). NRDC came into the national limelight with its very effective propaganda campaign in 1989 that falsely declared that Alar was a pesticide that caused cancer, causing great harm to apple growers. Alar is a chemical used for controlling fruit ripening and the cancer scare was as remote as the great cranberry cancer scare of the 1950s.

What makes NRDC’s involvement in pipeline issues informative is that President Obama appointed the current president of NRDC, Frances Beinecke, to the special commission investigating the BP Gulf Oil Spill and that his current nominee to head the US Department of Commerce, John Bryson, is a co-founder of NRDC.

In its opposition to the new pipeline NRDC states: **“The Keystone XL Pipeline Undermines the United States Commitment to a Clean Energy Economy. To meet an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 ...”** (boldface added)

Is the Environmental Industry, such as NRDC, setting the energy policy for the United States?

Please see referenced articles under “Environmental Industry” and “EPA on the March.”

Number of the Week: 2006. According to estimates by Clive Best, during the year 2006 the “normalized projections” from the lowest projections by 1990 IPCC models exceeded the “normalized” observed temperatures from surface and satellite data. If SEPP interprets his estimates correctly, during 2006, the projections of the models became statistically different from the observations, thus the models are empirically contradicted. Please see referenced article under “Models v. Data.”

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see: www.sepp.org.

1. Sustainability and ethical investment

By Martin Livermore, The Scientific Alliance, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/sustainability-and-ethical-investment>

2. A Gulf Drilling Revival

Notice how the energy breakthroughs are in oil and natural gas

Editorial, WSJ, Jun 10, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304392704576375782741824272.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_h

3. Alaska’s Ebbing Oil

Editorial, WSJ, Jun 7, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303745304576357751015958560.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?

Study finds global warming over past 400 years was due to increased Solar activity

Posted by Joanne Nova, June 9, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/06/study-finds-global-warming-over-past-400-years-was-due-to-increased-solar-activity/#more-15221>

Climategate Continued

Lindzen’s PNAS Reviews

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jun 10, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/>

Lindzen-Choi ‘Special Treatment’: Is Peer Review Biased Against Nonalarmist Climate Science?

by Chip Knappenberger, Master Resource, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/06/lindzen-choi-special-treatment/>

McShane and Wyner Weights on Mann 2008 Proxies

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jun 9, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/>

[“In my opinion, the problem is that you can’t simply throw a bunch of inconsistent time series into a multivariate mannomatic and expect to get a statistically significant response. **If a scientist cannot specify the sign of a proxy in advance, then the proxy shouldn’t be used.**”]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Alarmist climate science and the principle of exclusion

AGW theorists are being misled by the principle of exclusion

By Paul Macrae, WUWT, Jun 8, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/06/08/alarmist-climate-science-and-the-principle-of-exclusion/>

Warming, What Warming

By David Whitehouse, The Observatory, Jun 10, 2011

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-observatory/3192-warming-what-warming.html>

Defenders of the Orthodoxy

World Bank to suggest CO2 levy on jet, shipping fuel

By Gerard Wynn, Reuters, Jun 5, 2011 [H/t Catharine French]

<http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFLDE75407H20110605?sp=true>

Stanford climate scientists forecast permanently hotter summers

By Donna Hesterman

Stanford CA (SPX) Jun 08, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Stanford_climate_scientists_forecast_permanently_hotter_summers_99.html

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Fossils uncover a different take on climate change

By Jane Kennedy, ABC Mid West & Wheatbelt, AU, Jun 9, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2011/06/09/3240161.htm>

Climate isn’t up for debate

Alarmists refuse to take on skeptical geologists

By Tom Harris, Financial Post, Jun 7, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/06/07/climate-isnt-up-for-debate/>

Higher density means world forests are capturing more carbon

By Staff Writers, (SPX) Jun 08, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Higher_density_means_world_forests_are_capturing_more_carbon_999.html

Questioning the European Green

'We must stop pandering to climate scaremongers': Ex-Civil Service chief blasts ministers for global warming 'evangelism'

By Daily Mail Reporter, Daily Mail, UK, Jun 9, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2001189/Ministers-fall-climate-folly-warns-ex-Civil-Service-chief.html>

Why 'vote blue, go green' doesn't sound quite so clever any more

It is time for Britain to walk away from its ridiculously stringent renewable energy plan

By Charles Moore, Telegraph, UK, Jun 10, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/8569280/Why-vote-blue-go-green-doesnt-sound-quite-so-clever-any-more.html>

EU climate policies are driving smelters out of Europe'

By Karel Beckman, European Energy Review, Jun 6, 2011

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3019>

European energy companies risk missing out on a tremendous opportunity

The geo-economic blessings of shale gas

By Karel Beckman, European Energy Review, May 26, 2011

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=2998>

Problems within the Orthodoxy

The Self Corruption of Climate Science

By William Pentland, Forbes, Jun 9, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://blogs.forbes.com/williampentland/2011/06/09/the-self-corruption-of-climate-science/>

Norway systematically hid EU demands for oil-law reform

Leigh Phillips, EUobserver, 31.05.2011 @ 09:26 CET [H/t Catherine French]

<http://euobserver.com/9/32427/?rk=1>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

Naomi Oreskes, Conspiracy Queen

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, Jun 7, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/06/naomi_oreskes_conspiracy_queen.html

The Earth Is Full

By Thomas L. Friedman, NYT, June 7, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/08/opinion/08friedman.html?emc=eta1>

Portland should brace for 'climate refugees'

Eco Thoughts • Climate disruption could be defining issue of the century

By Kat West, Pamplin Media Group, Jun 9, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

http://www.portlandtribune.com/sustainable/story.php?story_id=130713227325162200

["Climate disruption will be the defining issue of this century and probably for centuries to come. No famine, no war, no plague, not even natural disasters will compare with the impacts of this event on human civilization."]

Models v. Data

1990 IPCC Predictions confront the data

By Clive Best, his Blog, Jun 9, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://clivebest.com/blog/?p=2208>

Ten Years and Counting: Where's The Global Warming?

By James Taylor, Forbes, Jun 8, 2011

<http://blogs.forbes.com/jamestaylor/2011/06/08/ten-years-and-counting-wheres-the-global-warming/>

Measurement Controversy

Crater Lake USHCN weather station—the GISS removal

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Jun 9, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/06/09/crater-lake-ushcn-weather-station-the-giss-removal/>

[SEPP Comment: Homogenizing the Data: Altering the historic record by removing long standing rural stations that do not show a strong late 20th century warming as compared with the early part of the century.]

Extreme Weather

Bringing Some Empirical Sense To All the Hurricane Hype

By Patrick Michaels, Forbes, Jun 3, 2011

<http://blogs.forbes.com/patrickmichaels/2011/06/03/bringing-some-empirical-sense-to-all-the-hurricane-hype/>

China evacuates tens of thousands in deadly flood

By Staff Writers, AFP, Jun 6, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/China_evacuates_tens_of_thousands_in_deadly_floods_999.html

[SEPP Comments: Before the dams were built, it may have been hundreds of thousands – dead.]

Changing Seas

Deception from NASA: Satellites are true cause of sea level rise

Climate Sanity, Jun 6, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://climatesanity.wordpress.com/2011/06/06/deception-from-nasa-satellites-are-true-cause-of-sea-level-rise/>

[SEPP Comment: Deception may be too harsh a word, but it is apparent there is a calibration issue between surface tidal gages and satellite measurements.]

Fear of Famine

A Warming Planet Struggles to Feed Itself

By Justin Gillis, NYT, Jun 4, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/science/earth/05harvest.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha2

Flawed Food Narrative in the New York Times

By Roger Pielke Jr, Jun 5, 2011 [H/t ACSH]

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2011/06/flawed-food-narrative-in-new-york-times.html>

Climate change in tropics poses food threat to poor

Higher temperatures will reduce growing seasons critical for crops needed to feed the world's poor, a report says

By John Vidal, Guardian, UK, Jun 3, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/jun/03/climate-change-tropics-threat-food-poor>

Can Technology Deliver on the Yield Challenge to 2050?

By R.A. Fischer, Derek Byerlee and G.O. Edmeades, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Jun 2009

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/ak977e/ak977e00.pdf>

Assuring Food Security in Developing Countries Under the Challenges of Climate Change: Key Trade and Development Issues of a Fundamental Transformation of Agriculture

By Ulrich Hoffmann, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Feb 2011

http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/osgdp20111_en.pdf

Growing a Better Future

Food justice in a resource-constrained world

By Robert Bailey, Oxfam, May 31, 2011

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/papers/growing-better-future.html>

Mapping hotspots of climate change and food insecurity in the global tropics

A report by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

Project team: Polly Ericksen, Philip Thornton, An Notenbaert, Laura Cramer, Peter Jones, Mario Herrero, June 3, 2011

http://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/assets/docs/ccafsreport5-climate_hotspots_advance-may2011.pdf

Litigation Issues

Taking the EPA to Court

World Climate Report, Jun 8, 2011

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2011/06/08/taking-the-epa-to-court/#more-493>

[SEPP Comment: Summary of the first part of the litigation. The second part is EPA's claim that the power to control new motor vehicle exhausts gives it the power to control all greenhouse gas emissions.]

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Why raising the federal gas tax is smart

Editorial, Washington Post, Jun 8, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-raising-the-federal-gas-tax-is-smart/2011/06/08/AG9qsRMH_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

[SEPP Comment: The Federal gas tax was a user tax to pay for interstate highways. The last data available indicates that about 40% is being diverted to other projects.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

China Ends Subsidies for Domestic Wind Equipment Makers after U.S. Files WTO Complaint

By Staff Writers, Power News, Jun 8, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3768.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2217483&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: After China cleverly captured the most modern technology.]

Chevy's Carbon Plan: Less Than Meets the Eye

The carmaker will buy carbon offsets if you buy a Chevy. But the carbon reductions may likely be less than promised

By Ben Elgin, Business Week, Jun 2, 2011

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/11_24/b4232028021946.htm

[SEPP Comment: The US has had weatherization programs since the 1970s. Isn't 35 years long enough to get the job done?]

Bailed-Out GM Spends Millions on Phantom Carbon Offsets

By Paul Chesser, National Legal and Policy Center, Jun 6, 2011

<http://nlpc.org/stories/2011/06/06/more-gm-use-taxpayer-dollars-credibility-environmentalists>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

The United Nations States Environmental Protection Agency

By Dennis Ambler, SPPI, May 26, 2011

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/the_un_states_envrio_protection_agency.pdf

[SEPP Comment: Details on the close interrelationships between the EPA and the environmental industry.]

Grant mischief at Obama's Employment Prevention Agency

Editorial, Washington Examiner, Jun 9, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/2011/06/grant-mischief-obamas-employment-prevention-agency>

[SEPP Comment: EPA Financing foreign activities and foreign governments?]

Environmental Protection (Or Propaganda?) Agency

By Paul Driessen and Willie Soon, IBD, Jun 6, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/574478/201106061822/Environmental-Protection-Or-Propaganda-Agency.htm>

EPA: State Department review of proposed pipeline is 'insufficient'

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Jun 7, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/165119-epa-state-department-review-of-proposed-pipeline-is-insufficient>

[SEPP Comment: EPA attempting to establish regulatory power over pipelines.]

The Hypocrisy of the EPA

By Rebekah Rast, Net Right Daily, Jun 9, 2011

<http://netrightdaily.com/2011/06/the-hypocrisy-of-the-epa/>

Energy Issues

BP Statistical Review: China overtakes USA as largest energy consumer

By Staff Writers, European Energy Review, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3034>

Statistical Review of World Energy 2011

By Staff Writers, BP, 2011

<http://www.bp.com/sectionbodycopy.do?categoryId=7500&contentId=7068481>

[SEPP Comment: One of the most widely respected annual reviews of energy production and use.]

Free Market, Not Government Policy, Drives Energy Boom

By Michael Barone, Townhall, Jun 9, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/michaelbarone/2011/06/09/free_market_not_government_policy_drives_energy_boom

Nuclear Fears & Responses

Japan Nuclear Watchdog: Fuel Has Possibly Melted Through Daiichi 1's Pressure Vessel

By Staff Writers, Power News, Jun 8, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3767.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2217483&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e66050d0

Germany looks to post-nuclear era

By Staff Writers, AFP, Jun 6, 2011

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Germany_looks_to_post-nuclear_era_999.html

Nuclear energy vital for economic growth: Russia

By Staff Writers, AFP, Jun 6, 2011

[http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Nuclear energy vital for economic growth Russia 999.html](http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Nuclear_energy_vital_for_economic_growth_Russia_999.html)

NRC chief Jaczko in hot seat over critical Yucca Mountain report

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Jun 10, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/165759-report-nrc-chief-withheld-information-in-effort-to-abandon-yucca-mountain>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Exxon makes major oil discovery in Gulf

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill - 06/08/11 02:24 PM ET

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/165409-exxon-makes-major-oil-discovery-in-gulf>

Administration Control of Fossil Fuels

U.S. Goes On An Energy Starvation Diet

Editorial, IBD, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/574953/201106091846/Cost-Of-Green-14-Million-Jobs.htm>

Oil Sands Project in Canada Will Go On if Pipeline Is Blocked

By Ian Austen, NYT, Jun 6, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/07/business/energy-environment/07pipeline.html?_r=2

[SEPP Comment: *If the oil does not come south to the US, it can go west to China.*]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy

The Gas Is Greener

By Robert Bryce, NYT, Jun 7, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/08/opinion/08bryce.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=th212

[SEPP Comment: *Oil and gas wells cover less open spaces than windmills.*]

Fitting wind onto the electricity grid (part 2)

By Ulrich Decher, Ans Nuclear Café, May 26, 2011

<http://ansnuclearcafe.org/2011/05/26/fitting-wind-onto-the-electricity-grid-part-2/>

[SEPP Comment: *A real problem.*]

Scotland vows ‘green energy powerhouse’

By Staff Writers, UPI, Jun 6, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Scotland_vows_green_energy_powerhouse_999.html

Overestimating Wind Power Generation: From the UK to New York State

By Lisa Linowes, Master Resource, June 6, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/06/overestimating-wind-power-from-the-uk-ny/>

Carbon Schemes

Post-Combustion Carbon Capture Center Commissioned at National Test Center

By Staff Writers, Power News, Jun 8, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3773.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2217483&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Ocean Acidification and Calcifying Claims

Reference: Range, P., Chicharo, M.A., Ben-Hamadou, R., Pilo, D., Matias, D., Joaquim, S., Oliveira, A.P. and Chicharo, L. 2011. Calcification, growth and mortality of juvenile clams *Ruditapes decussatus* under increased pCO₂ and reduced pH: Variable responses to ocean acidification at local scales? *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 396: 177-184.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jun/8jun2011a5.html>

Plants Surviving Global Warming on Mountainsides

Reference: Scherrer, D. and Korner, C. 2011. Topographically controlled thermal-habitat differentiation buffers alpine plant diversity against climate warming, *Journal of Biogeography* 38: 406-416.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jun/8jun2011a4.html>

Maldivian Reefs: Fighting Back from Near Oblivion

Reference: Lasagna, R., Albertelli, G., Giovannetti, E., Grondona, M., Milani, A., Morri, C. and Bianchi, C.N. 2008. Status of Maldivian reefs eight years after the 1998 coral mass mortality. *Chemistry and Ecology* 24: 67-72.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jun/8jun2011a3.html>

Hear Ye, Hear Ye: Ocean Acidification and Ocean Noise

Reference Reeder, D.B. and Chiu, C.-S. 2010. Ocean acidification and its impact on ocean noise: Phenomenology and analysis. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 128: 10.1121/1.3431091.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jun/7jun2011a4.html>

Detecting the Footprint of Man in Tropical Cyclone Damage Data

Reference: Crompton, R.P., Pielke, Jr., R.A. and McAneney, K.J. 2011. Emergence timescales for detection of anthropogenic climate change in US tropical cyclone loss data. *Environmental Research Letters* 6: 10.1088/1748-9326/6/1/014003.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/jun/7jun2011a1.html>

Health, Energy, and Warming

Report: 'Green' buildings could harm your health

By Julian Pecquet, The Hill, Jun 7, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/165191-report-green-buildings-could-harm-your-health>

Environmental Industry

Say No to Tar Sands Pipeline: Proposed Keystone XL Project Would Deliver Dirty Fuel at a High Cost

By Staff Writers, Natural Resources Defense Council, March 2011

<http://www.nrdc.org/land/files/TarSandsPipeline4pgr.pdf>

Cairn awaits ruling on eco warriors

By Christopher Thompson in the Davis Strait, Financial Times, June 6 2011 [H/t Sonja Boehmer-Christiansen]

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bc764a50-906a-11e0-9227-00144feab49a.html#axzz1OhnyaedI>

[SEPP Comment: Greenpeace has received significant publicity for its invasions of private property. It is trying to do so again which oil platforms in Greenland.]

Court Rules Against Greenpeace in Drilling Protest

By Archibald Preuschat and Alexis Flynn, WSJ, Jun 9, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304259304576375740250241436.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

[SEPP Comment: May be behind a paywall.]

Big Green donors give money, marching orders

By Ron Arnold, Washington Examiner, Jun 9, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/06/big-green-donors-give-money-marching-orders>

Other Scientific News

NASA Spending Shift to Benefit Centers Focused on Science and Technology

By Staff Writers, SPX, Jun 08, 2011

http://www.space-travel.com/reports/NASA_Spending_Shift_to_Benefit_Centers_Focused_on_Science_and_Technology_99.html

Big news (not): Atrazine never caused cancer, and it still doesn't

By Alyssa Pelish, ASCH, Jun 9, 2011

http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.2717/news_detail.asp

Experts' riposte to chemophobia in The New England Journal of Medicine

By Alyssa Pelish, ASCH Dispatch, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/>

[SEPP Comment: Claims that 85 to 95% of cancers are caused by environmental factors cannot be substantiated.]

Egyptian Mummies Hold Clues of Ancient Air Pollution

By Owen Jarus, Live Science, Jun 3, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://www.livescience.com/14420-ancient-egyptian-mummies-lung-disease-pollution.html>

[SEPP Comment: Air pollution predated the industrial revolution?]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Greenpeace says Barbie doll is forest vandal

By Staff Writers, AFP, Jun 8, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1133983/1/.html

The dangers of bone-headed beliefs

By Richard Glover, SMH, Jun 6, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/the-dangers-of-boneheaded-beliefs-20110602-1fjg.html>

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ARTICLES:

1. Sustainability and ethical investment

By Martin Livermore, The Scientific Alliance, Jun 9, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/sustainability-and-ethical-investment>

'Sustainable' is a term which entered the public consciousness some time ago. These days, it seems that sustainability is demanded in almost any area of life, from eating, drinking and travelling to finance and investment. But the usual definition quoted relates to sustainable development and comes from the 1987 Brundtland Commission (the World Commission for Environment and Development) report: "sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Like the precautionary principle, this is something which seems eminently sensible on the surface. After all, it surely makes sense not to squander limited resources selfishly if current needs can be properly catered for without so doing. But, as so often, a seemingly pure and unarguably good principle begins to take on shades of grey under greater scrutiny. After all, how are we to determine what future generations will need? We may selflessly conserve a particular resource which turns out to be unimportant in fifty years' time, while unwittingly depleting another one whose use becomes vital. Of course, over-exploiting water resources or fisheries cause problems, but these are more immediate; lack of water or an important protein source affects the present generation directly.

The concept is a slippery enough one for human development, but things get even murkier when we begin to look at the sustainability of other areas of life. As soon as we begin to define the term and make detailed rules, the concept begins to lose a lot of its value. For example, it is common to consider that there are three key elements of sustainability: environmental, human and economic. For something to be regarded as properly sustainable, it has to tick all the right boxes, but inevitably the criteria used depend on subjective judgement by particular individuals.

Development does not proceed along some straight line, extrapolated from the current situation. At infrequent intervals, disruptive technologies become available or paradigm-changing events occur. Fifty years ago, the present ubiquitous nature of electronic communications was not predicted. People looking forward at that stage may have seen a problem with the supply of paper or, if particularly far-sighted, may have seen the potential for centralised mainframe computers to hold and share basic records. It was at this time that IBM, for a time to become dominant as a computer supplier, chose not to acquire xerox technology for dry 'photocopying' because of the lack of market. Later, they and other established companies were equally blind to the market potential for what became personal computers.

There are plenty of similar examples which humankind, being adaptable and forward-looking by nature, tends to take for granted and forget. Equally, there are plenty of examples of predicted technological progress which have not yet come to pass (personal air travel to effectively move cars off the ground seems to be a perennial favourite). Faced with this sort of problem, those making projections of future development understandably tend to make straight line projections, perhaps modified by the inclusion of fashionable or pet emerging technologies. All we can say for sure about such predictions is that they will be wrong; in what way we cannot say.

Nevertheless, sustainability is a concept which is too important to be ignored. For some time, companies have published so-called corporate responsibility reports, showing how their activities have benefited poor communities and the environment. To the cynical, this can be seen as 'greenwashing': improving the image of a company to take attention away from its primary purpose of making a profit for shareholders. But in fact the CSR agenda has been embraced wholeheartedly by many companies and sectors of industry. It is part of today's way of doing business and has, incidentally, created a new business sector of CSR practitioners and advisers. Inevitably, a significant part of this relates to programmes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Such activities and reports are taken seriously and there is a growing 'ethical' investment sector which is as concerned about sustainability issues as profits. Ethical funds have been around for some time, to cater

for investors who prefer not to put their money into companies which have connections with tobacco, alcohol, arms or any of a myriad of other sectors deemed undesirable. But this has moved on and now, for some, the Wall Street ethos of 'greed is good' has become 'green is good'.

For the ethical investor, not only is it sufficient to avoid 'bad' companies, but 'good' ones are sought out. Prominent among those are companies investing in renewable energy projects. This seems a safe bet, a good combination of the moral high ground and profits. After all, the government (or to be more precise, the taxpayer) is paying operators of wind turbines and solar power farms handsomely for every kilowatt of power they produce, whether it can be used or not. Even better (from the investor's point of view, but not for the taxpayer) are the times when wind farm operators are paid *not* to produce, because the grid does not need their power.

But nothing is without risk. The government may have promised a certain feed-in tariff, but could this ever be withdrawn? There were certainly problems for some investors in solar power in Spain when the government withdrew their highly generous redistribution of taxpayers' money. But even if governments continue to make renewables artificially profitable for developers, such guarantees are only for a finite time (for the UK, 20 years). Investors need to think about what might happen at the end of this period.

The implicit assumption for now is that subsidies are a way to boost the introduction of wind and solar power and that when the present phase is over, renewables will have either become competitive because all energy costs will be higher (possible for wind, depending on how you do the sums) or a further round of support will be put in place to enable governments to reach their self-imposed targets for emissions reduction (certainly for photovoltaics which are unlikely to be anywhere near cost effective by this time).

Direct investors in current schemes can expect an excellent rate of return over 20 years, but at the end of that period they may well be left with worthless assets. Wind turbines are unlikely to have a service life longer than this. If the current enthusiasm for renewables turns out by then to have been a passing phase, operators will be faced with the cost of removing turbines and restoring the land. 'Ethical' investors who may have put their money into the supply industry might find their investments worthless, since there would be no new installations.

Markets – and people – are often irrational. From tulipomania to the South Seas bubble to the technology boom (and bust) at the end of last century, investors pile into areas which, by any normal standards, are vastly over-valued. The same cannot be said for the current round of green investments, because the return is effectively underwritten by governments. Investors know that taxpayers will provide the dividends. But this is not value creation, merely wealth redistribution. As such it is difficult to see how it can be viewed as either sustainable or ethical. If the current belief in anthropogenic global warming wanes, or even if governments decide that emissions control is not the best way to tackle it, green investments may become just one more burst bubble.

2. A Gulf Drilling Revival

Notice how the energy breakthroughs are in oil and natural gas

Editorial, WSJ, Jun 10, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304392704576375782741824272.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_h

Exxon Mobil Corp.'s huge new oil discovery in the Gulf of Mexico is good news for domestic energy production, but it's even better news as a sign that last year's panic over the BP spill won't continue to cripple American offshore oil exploration. Every so often, reality triumphs over politics.

Exxon had been ready to drill on the site last year before the Obama Administration shut down all deepwater drilling in the wake of the BP spill. The Interior Department is still issuing very few permits, only 15 for new wells since it lifted its moratorium in October, but Exxon received one of them and struck black gold at 7,000 feet below sea level and some 230 miles at sea.

That's nearly 3,000 feet deeper than BP's Macondo well and shows how technology and innovation have opened up oil and gas resources that were impossible to detect, much less reach and develop, only a few years ago. Exxon estimates the field contains some 700 million barrels of oil equivalent, one of the largest finds of the last decade.

The great energy irony of recent years is that governments have thrown hundreds of billions of dollars at wind, solar, ethanol and other alternative fuels, yet the major breakthroughs have taken place in the traditional oil and natural gas business. Hydraulic fracturing in shale, horizontal drilling and new seismic techniques are only the best known examples.

Private companies must innovate to survive, and they have the profit incentive to do so, while government cash is usually steered to politically favored companies that may or may not know what they're doing. If you live off federal grants, you need to work the corridors of power more than the technology. Federal grants for cellulosic ethanol are rife with political earmarks, for example. This is why these columns have argued that the political fad of alternative energy has misallocated scarce capital when the economy can least afford it.

The risk of oil spills has not vanished. But one lesson of the BP debacle is that better management and practices could have prevented it. The Obama Administration is making it harder to obtain permits, which will eliminate all but the biggest companies from deepwater drilling and (unfortunately) raise the cost of production.

Far more important for safety is the effort that the oil industry is taking to contain future deepwater spills. ConocoPhillips, Exxon, Shell and Chevron have led an effort, since joined by other companies, to form the Marine Well Containment Co. to build a spill containment system that will be permanently placed in the Gulf starting next year.

The companies are attempting to apply the lessons from the BP fiasco, and their expectation is that the system would be able to handle a blowout as if it were a contained well at depths of up to 10,000 feet. The companies have committed \$1 billion to the project, and we're told the cost could reach \$1.5 billion. If you believe Big Oil companies are inherently evil, you'll think this is one more confidence trick. But no rational company or CEO wants to endure the reputational damage that accompanied the BP spill.

The Exxon discovery is a display of the animal spirits that still live in the U.S. energy industry, notwithstanding the political efforts to stifle them. As much as Washington tries, the U.S. economy is hard to keep down.

3. Alaska's Ebbing Oil

Editorial, WSJ, Jun 7, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303745304576357751015958560.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

Perhaps you've heard politicians call for "independence" from foreign oil, however unrealistic the goal. What you probably haven't heard about is the determined environmental campaign, abetted by the Obama Administration, to shut down the 38-year-old Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

In its 1980s heyday, the 800-mile pipeline pushed some 2.2 million barrels of oil a day from Alaska's North Slope to the port of Valdez. Yet as the rich fields of Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk River have declined, oil flow has dropped to one-third of that volume. The drop-off is now causing serious technical problems, as slow-flowing oil drops in temperature and clogs and corrodes the pipe. Failing a technological fix, or more oil, the pipe's near-term viability is at risk.

Environmentalists know that if the pipeline is shut down, by law it must be dismantled. If they can starve the pipeline of supply, they can kill Alaskan drilling.

Even with the potential of shale natural gas and offshore deepwater drilling, Alaska remains a great American energy resource. Prudhoe Bay and the Kuparuk are the two largest U.S. oil fields and have sent some 16.2 billion barrels of oil southward. Yet these state lands are dwarfed by the oil-heavy federal lands and waters that surround them.

To the west is the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve Alaska, created in 1923 by Warren Harding and by some estimates holding up to 15 billion barrels of oil. To the east is the 19-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), including its smaller permafrost plain specifically set aside for development. This area—only 2,000 acres of which is necessary for oil drilling—holds up to 16 billion barrels. To the north are the vast Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, estimated to hold 30 billion barrels of oil equivalent—a reserve even bigger than Prudhoe.

Yet little or no commercial oil has flowed from these federal lands. Environmentalists have lobbied Congress to block drilling in ANWR for decades, and their strategy elsewhere has been to flood commercial leases with litigation. The Bush Administration in 2008 held the first lease sale in the Chukchi Sea since 1991, successfully auctioning 2.7 million acres. Environmental groups immediately sued, and last July a judge halted exploration.

Greens have also gamed the regulatory system, which can require companies to obtain an average of 35 permits to drill an exploratory well. Shell earlier this year canceled plans to drill in the Beaufort Sea, after five years of struggling to get a federal air-emission permit. The Environmental Protection Agency initially granted that permit only to have greens appeal to an internal EPA review board—which denied it earlier this year.

In response to \$4-a-gallon gasoline, the Obama Administration recently proposed lease sales in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska. Yet the Administration has also used the Gulf of Mexico spill as an excuse to sit on most permits out of Alaska and the Gulf. The Army Corps of Engineers as recently as February denied ConocoPhillips a permit it had been working on for five years to access a lease it owns in the National Petroleum Reserve. The Corps is also sitting on a North Slope permit for Exxon Mobil.

Thanks to these roadblocks, the Alaska pipeline has about 1.5 million barrels of unused capacity a day, and environmental attorneys like Brendan Cummings of the Center for Biological Diversity can boast that the pipeline is "past its expiration date." Americans who want to import less oil from abroad should understand how close Washington is to closing off Alaskan oil drilling.

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