

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating December 3, 2017

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations; however, anyone wishing to join should make a donation to Pax Christi U.S.A. and notify Maria Tobin, matob@aol.com, to receive email messages sent to members. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Théas of Montauban, France, by Marthe Dortel Claudot, as a Christian lay organization dedicated to preventing a repetition of the savagery of the twentieth century's world wars. Send comments on the newsletter to J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com.

Editorial

After the calendar, the *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent. Tom Keene's poem is *Irony*, pointing to one of many ironies to be encountered in everyday life. <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> has more of Tom's poems. San Antonio is now officially on record as considering itself a Compassionate City, having accepted the *Charter for Compassion*. The text of the international *Charter for Compassion* is next, with an explanatory note of its relevance to San Antonio. Joseph L. Cook's "the Arctic and Climate Change" follows.

Calendar

Tuesday November 28, noon-1:00pm, **in Austin**, Sanctary Cities: Strangers No Longer—Rights and Responsibilities for the Common Good. Discussion based on the joint statement of the U.S. and Mexican bishops' statement, "Strangers No Longer" (1-22-2003). Fleck Hall 314, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress Ave., Austin. Lunch provided with RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/religion-culture-conversation-sanctuary-cities-strangers-no-longer-tickets-39837375663>. Please note that the bishops' statement is accessible at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/strangers-no-longer-together-on-the-journey-of-hope.cfm>.

Tuesday November 28, 6:00pm-8:00pm, "It's Not on MY Map: A Panel Discussion on Equity Impacts in SA." Diego Bernal, Pattie Radle, Queta Rodriguez, Richard Montez, Matthew Martinez, covering ZIP codes 78207, 78237, 78202, 78203. YWCA, 503 Castroville Rd. Extra parking at Las Palmas Library, next door.

Tuesday November 28, 6:30pm-9:00pm, Robert Rico, MPA and Sofia Bahena, Ed.D., Restorative Justice: An Alternative to disciplinary Policies in Our Schools. Martinez Street Women's Center, 801 Olive St.

Tuesday November 28, 7:00pm-10:00pm, short films: "The Air We Breathe," "Breath Is Lyfe," and videos of indigenous-led resistance to the Dos Republicas coal mine. These are sponsored by the Sierra Club. Brick at Blue Blue Star Arts Complex, 108 Blue Star (near intersection of S. Alamo St. and Proband).

Wednesday November 29, 2:00pm-4:00pm, video, *Written on Water*, on the tension between property rights and state-mandated pumping limits in west Texas. Mabee Library Room 221, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Thursday November 30, 6:00pm, UTSA Social Work, "Through the Lens: End Rape Culture." San Antonio Central Library, 600 Soledad.

Saturday December 2, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., #27. (Go north on Starcrest from I-410; Starcrest becomes a divided road. The apartment complex is located between Hidden Drive and Granby Court, on the south-bound side of Starcrest. (It is possible to park at a church across the street.)

Monday December 4, 3:30pm, video, "In the Light of Reverence," documenting obstacles to religious freedom of land-based practitioners: Lakota at Devil's tower, Hopi in the Four Corners area, and the Wintu at Mt. Shasta. Christus Heritage hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Monday December 4, 7:00pm, Tyrone B. Hayes, Ph.D., "From Silent Spring to Silent Night: A Tale of Toads and Men," discussing research that became the basis of a class action law suit against Syngenta, the Swiss manufacturer of atrazine. Laurie Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Third Reading (Mark 13:33-37)

The First Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year; the third reading selections will usually be taken from the *Gospel of Mark* rather than, as has been the case for the past twelve months, from the *Gospel of Matthew*. The passage for this coming Sunday appears in *Mark* immediately after the Markan apocalyptic end-times section. It says repeatedly and with different images, "Be watchful!"

There is a perennial danger of taking biblical passages too literally and confining transcendent insights and realities within the concrete depictions and verbalizations that we humans can manage, as opposed to the capacities of the divine. The Coming, said to be expected at the end of time, does not follow and will not follow a human bureaucratic development plan or a schedule as marked by clocks and calendars. To play detective with apocalyptic passages in the Bible in order to foretell the Day and Hour is a fool's errand.

Incidentally, I was never so vilified in my life as I was when I volunteered to teach a course on world religions at a state university and, in the treatment of the Hebrew and Christian traditions, made this point about timing the end times. The course was much in demand, and an ordained minister who regularly taught it could not provide enough sections; he asked me to offer a section as a favor. When word reached him that I was not sticking at all to a fundamentalist line he proceeded to denounce me to university authorities and encouraged students to file complaints about my alleged anti-religious bias. Christians can be so unchristian when threatened by references to the divine escaping controllable categories—

Do I digress? Not really. If we fixate on where we imagine the divine to be found, we will not be watchful enough to notice where the divine chooses to be present.

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Poem

Irony

I love the smell of napalm in the morning.
Apocalypse Now (1979)

The observer at Rita's Fiesta Café, watches
as the pre-teen boy and grandparents
seat themselves.

In bold letters, the boy's T-shirt front proclaims,
I LOVE THE SMELL OF JET FUEL IN THE MORNING.
The shirt's back reads: THE SMELL OF FREEDOM.

The observer recalls the Vietnam photo:
A pre-teen girl runs toward the camera,
her companions running after
splattered with that which burns to the bone.

Tom Keene
August 4, 2017

Charter for Compassion

When the new San Antonio City Council first met some months ago, it adopted the *Charter for Compassion* at the urging of the peaceCenter of San Antonio. For those who are not familiar with the Charter, it is presented here:

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefor call upon all men and women: To restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion. To return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate. To ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures. To encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity. To cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

See www.charterforcompassion.org.

The Arctic and Climate Change

Joseph L. Cook



ARCTIC CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Arctic has been losing sea ice extent, sea ice volume and also the sea ice that is left is younger sea ice. The implications of this will have global impacts.

GLOBAL AND ARCTIC TEMPERATURES

Arctic Temperatures should be a major concern to the world since the Arctic in general will warm twice as fast as the rest of the world and has already broken the 2 Degree Celsius (C) level that the world agreed to limit overall global warming to in the Paris Climate Agreement. I feel that one of the major deficiencies of the Paris Climate Accord- is that limits of global temperature changes should have taken into consideration temperature increases in both the Arctic and the Antarctic since both these areas impact overall global climate. By not establishing temperature limits for the Arctic, there is the potential that when the world reaches an overall temperature increase of 2 degrees C that the changes in the Arctic will be severe and may lead to unforeseen impacts on the world if the Arctic becomes ice free.

GLOBAL TEMPERATURES

This overall trend in increasing global temperatures (Figure 1) does not bode well for what will happen over the next 80+ years until 2100. In fact if the trend continues as seen in 2017 we potentially will have global temperatures above 2 degrees Celsius (C) long before 2100. The global temperature increase has already hit 1.1 degrees C in 2017.

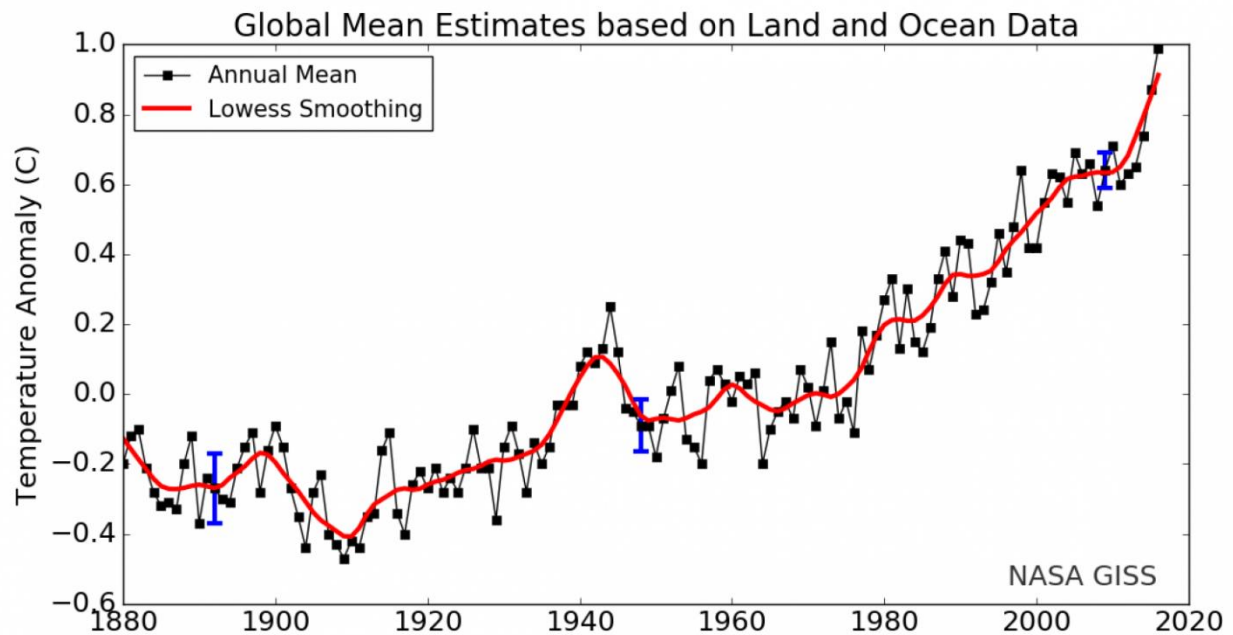


Figure 1: Global Temperature Trend from 1880s to the Present

Most of that heat from global climate change is going into the oceans (Figure 2)

Where is global warming going?

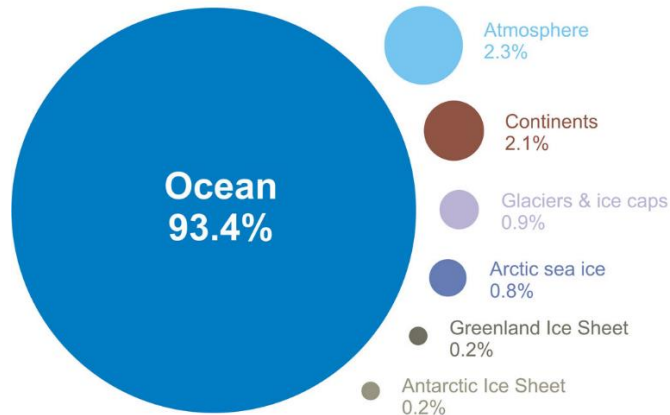


Figure 2- Where is the heat from Global Warming Going.

With ever increasing ocean temperatures (Figure 3) there will be ever increasing impacts on global climate events and increasing impacts on Arctic and Antarctic Sea Ice melt.

Increasing atmospheric temperatures (Figure 4) both globally in the oceans and in particularly in the Arctic Ocean are effecting Arctic Sea ice extent, volume and age which we will explore next.

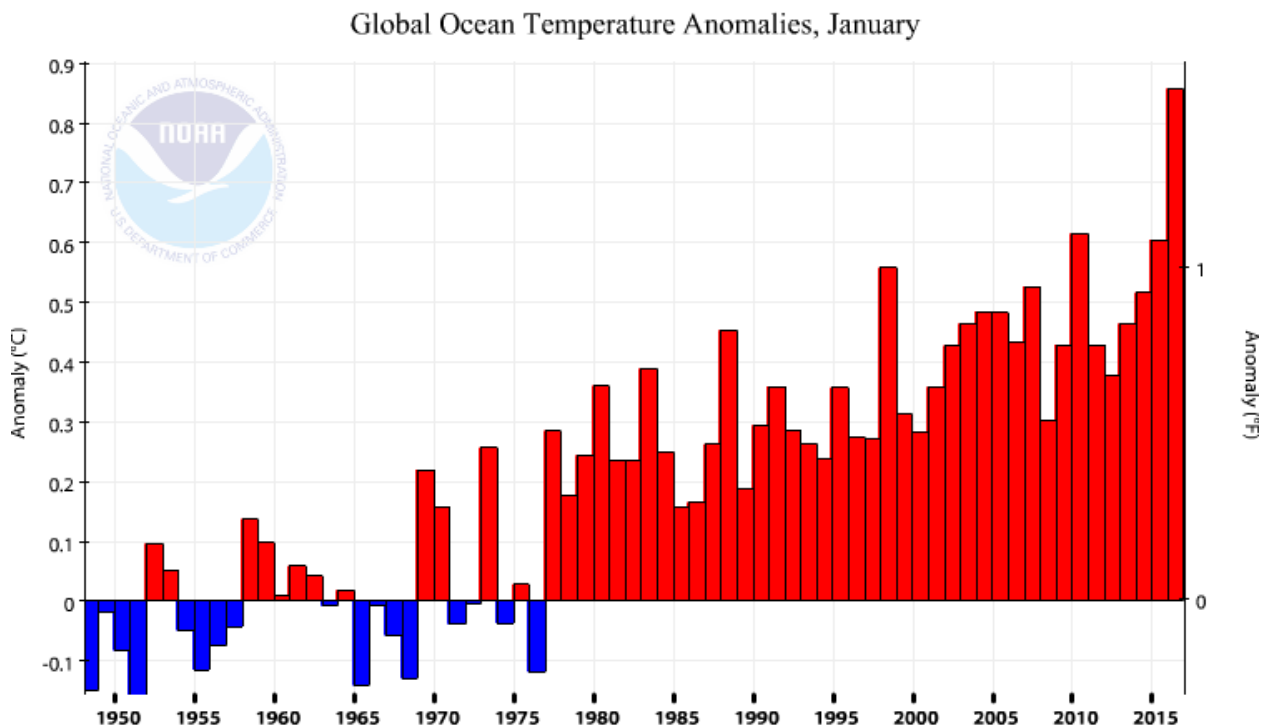


Figure 3: Ocean temperature increases over time

Arctic Air Temperature Difference

October 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017

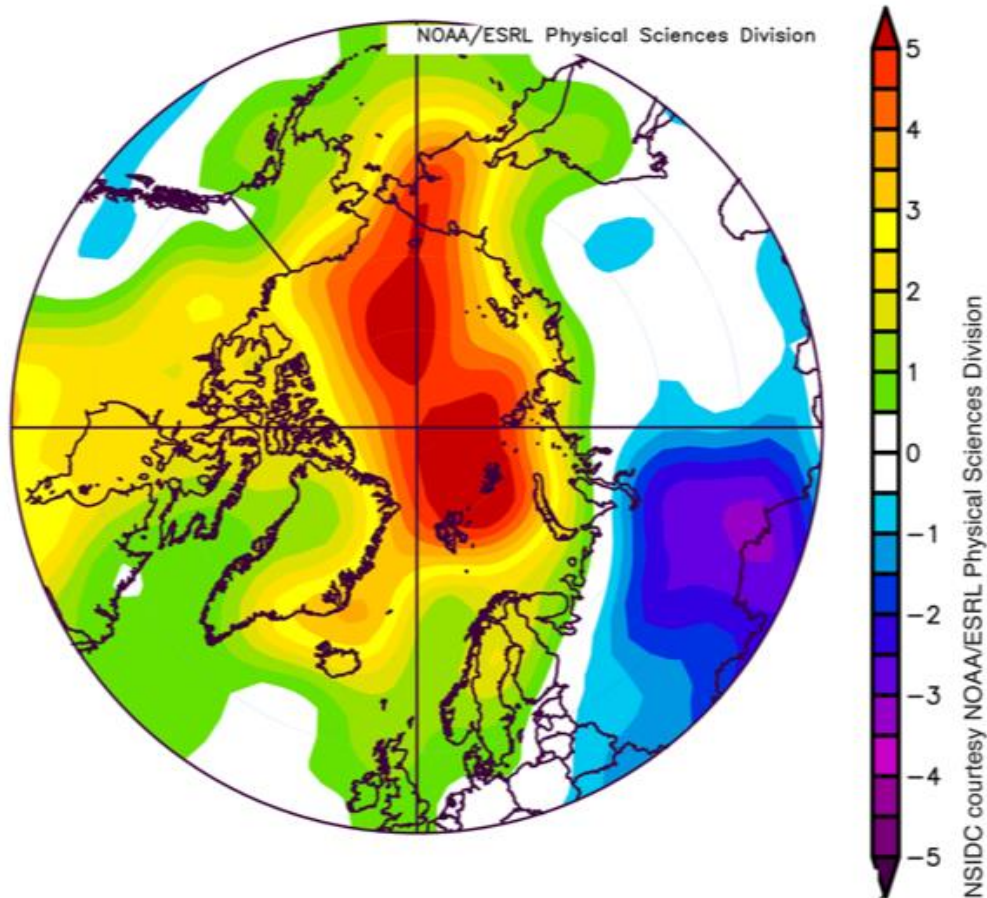


Figure 4- Changes in Arctic Temperatures from October 2016 to February 2017

SEA ICE EXTENT

Sea ice extent over the last 37 years has been decreasing because of higher than normal arctic ocean temperatures and atmospheric temperatures (Figure 5). The red line shows sea ice extent in 2017 to November 1, 2017. Comparisons of sea ice extent from 1998 to present shows decreasing levels of sea ice over time (Figure 6).

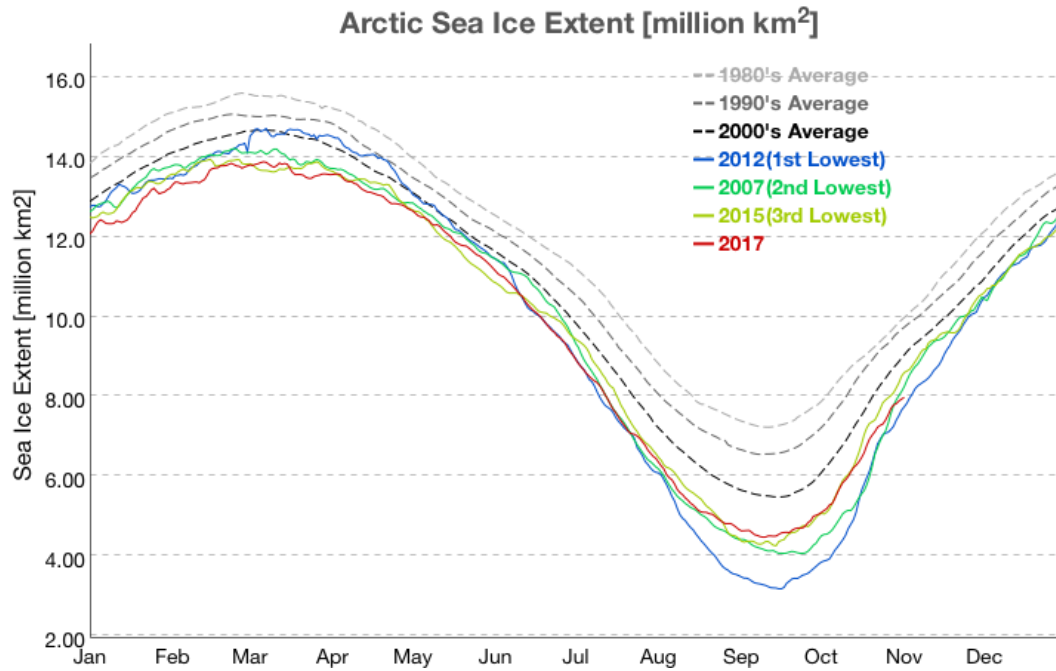


Figure 5: Sea Ice extent from 1980s to November 1, 2017

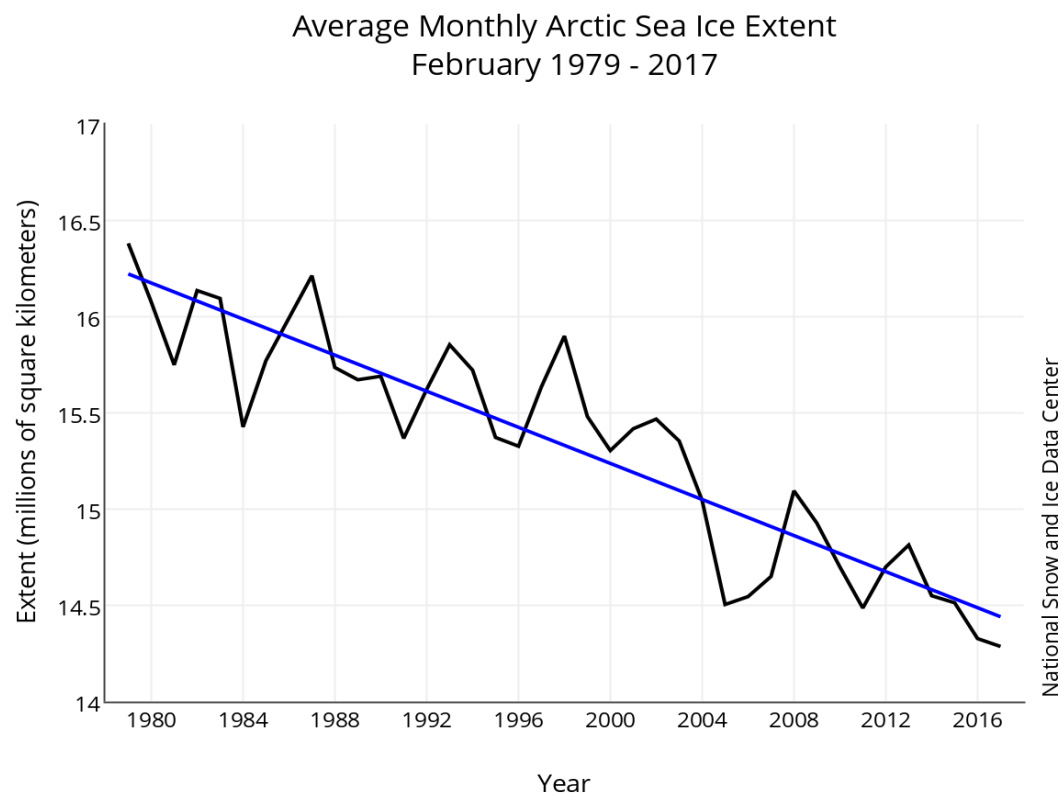


Figure 6: February 1979 - 2017 Sea Ice Extent

Sea Ice extent historically since 400 AD is at an all time low (Figure 7). The recent decrease since 1900 is dramatic and reflects human-made climate effects through global warming. What is interesting is that climate projections are for far higher levels of sea ice extent than what is being seen recently (Figure 8). We can hope that the observed trend will not continue as it currently is doing now but if observations continue to be far below projections for sea ice extent we are in for an interesting and threatening future when we combine the observations for sea ice extent with those of sea ice volume which we will examine next.

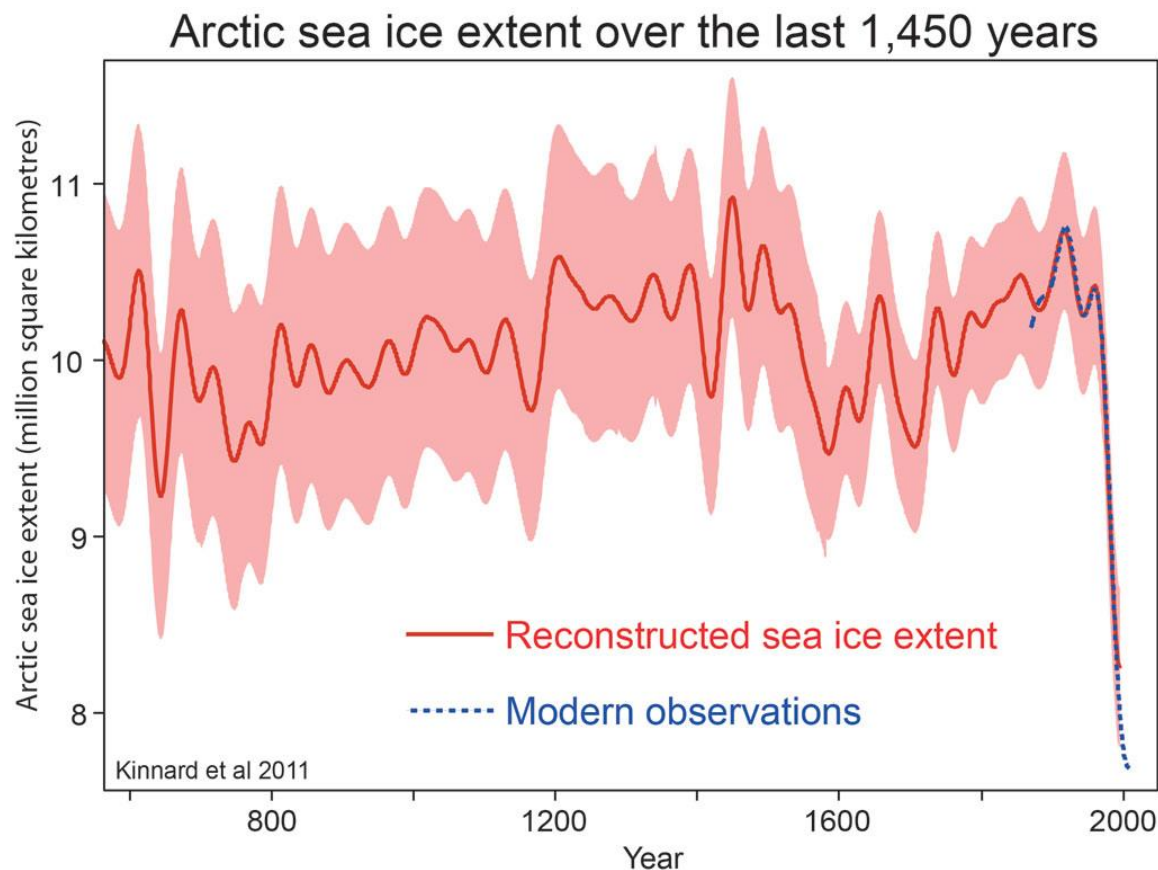
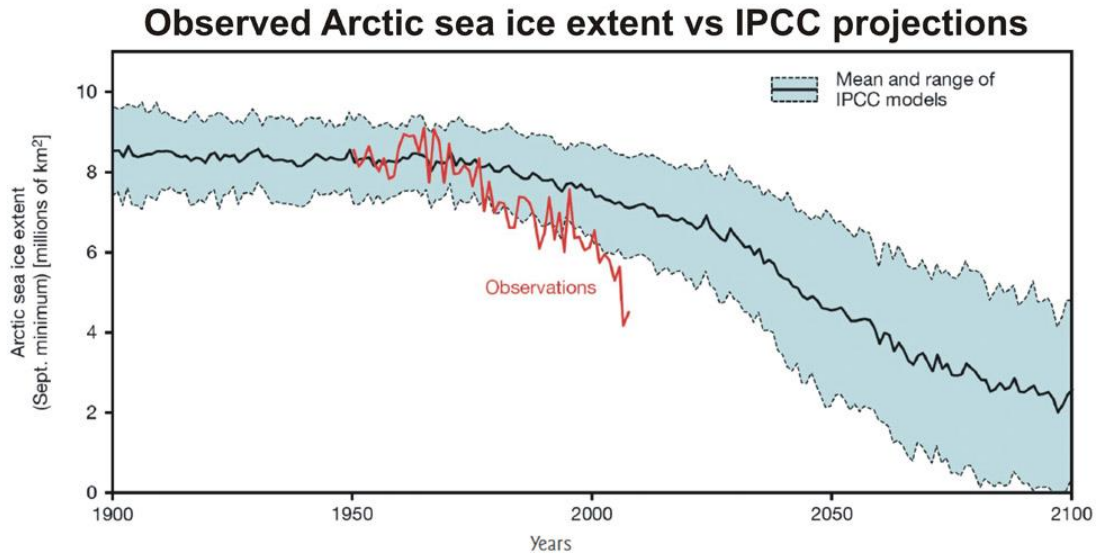


Figure 7: Historic Sea Ice Extent from 400 AD to Present

**In a climate system with net positive feedback,
climate response is likely to be greater than expected**



Copenhagen Diagnosis 2009

<http://sks.to/model>

Figure 8: Trend in Sea Ice Extent 1900-2100- projection versus Observation

Just as sea ice extent is decreasing, sea ice volume, is also decreasing over time. The trend has been that around 3100 km³ of sea ice volume is disappearing per decade (Figure 9).

SEA ICE VOLUME

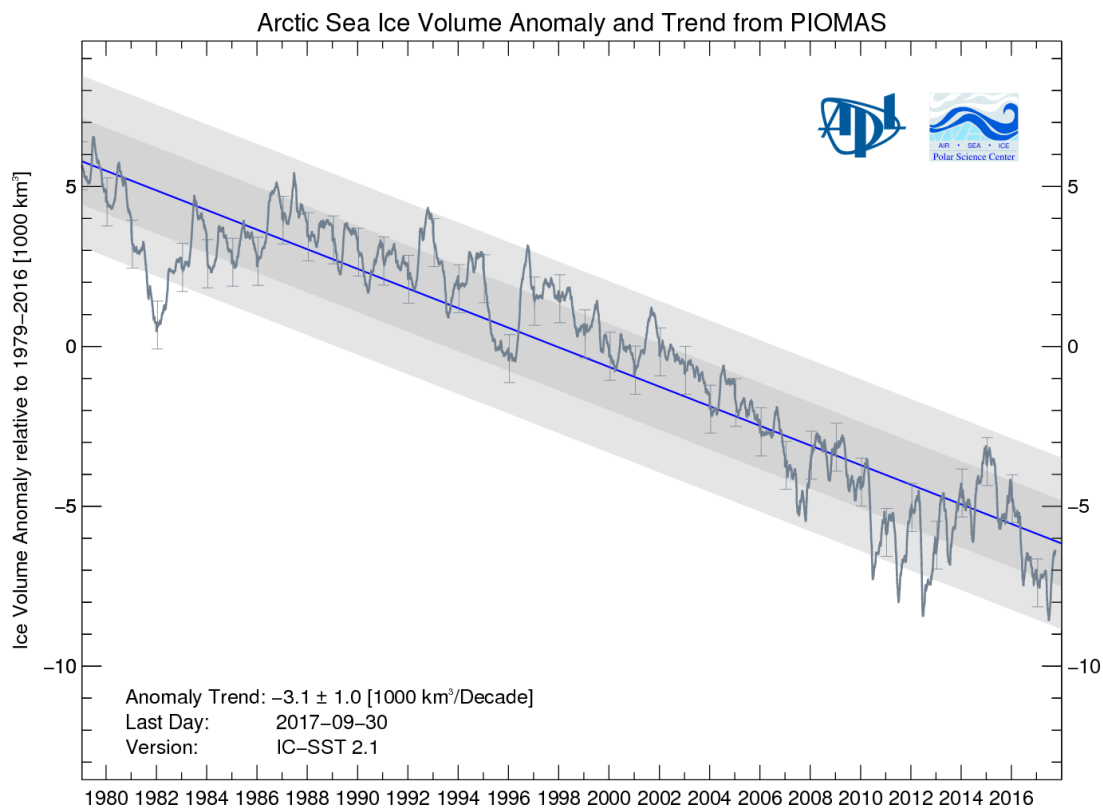


Figure 9- Sea Ice Volume (last reading September 30, 2017)

An interesting graphic illustrate the trend in sea ice volume over time-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NP0L1PG9ag&app=desktop>

Some predict if this trend in sea ice extent continues – in September we potentially will be ice free in the Arctic in September by as early as 2020-2027 (Figure 10). I am not that pessimistic, but feel we will be ice free in the Arctic somewhere between 2025-2035 – I just look at the plotting of the slope of the trend line as not being as steep as figure 10. Non-the-less, whichever trend you think will occur- at some point the Arctic sea ice minimum in September will surely occur before early projections of 2100 and many years before that.

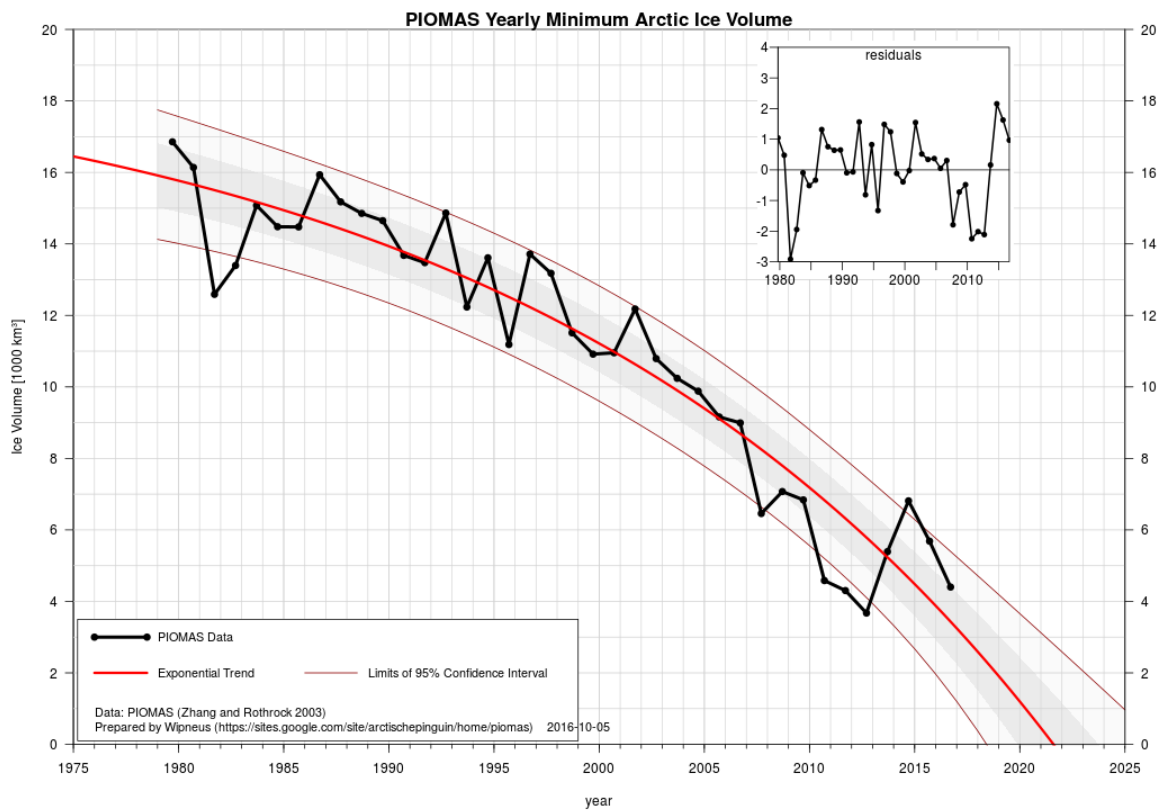


Figure 10: Projection Arctic sea ice volumes into the future

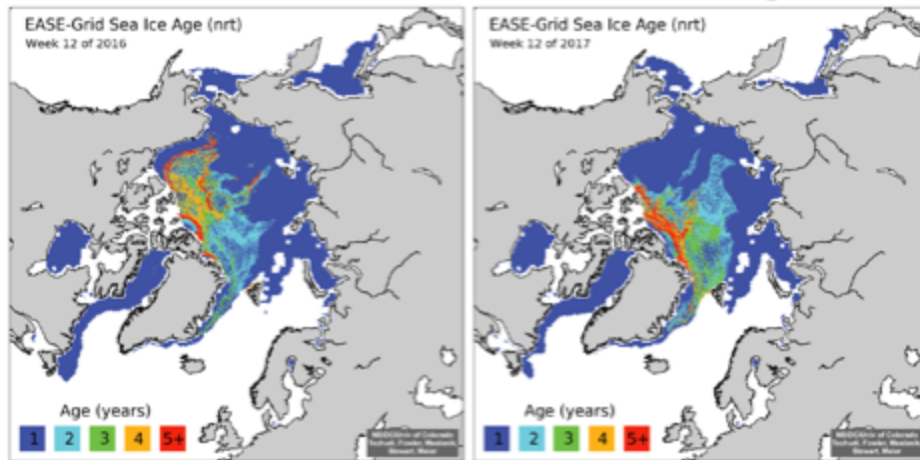
Another implication of decreasing sea ice extent and decreasing sea ice volume is decreasing sea ice age profiles.

SEA ICE AGE PROFILES

In addition to decreasing sea ice extent and volume, is decreasing sea ice age profiles see- (<https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4509> - put this website in your browser).

Figure 11 shows a trend that Arctic sea ice from 1985 to 2016 with younger ice with each passing year.

Arctic Sea ice Age



Sea Ice Age, End of March

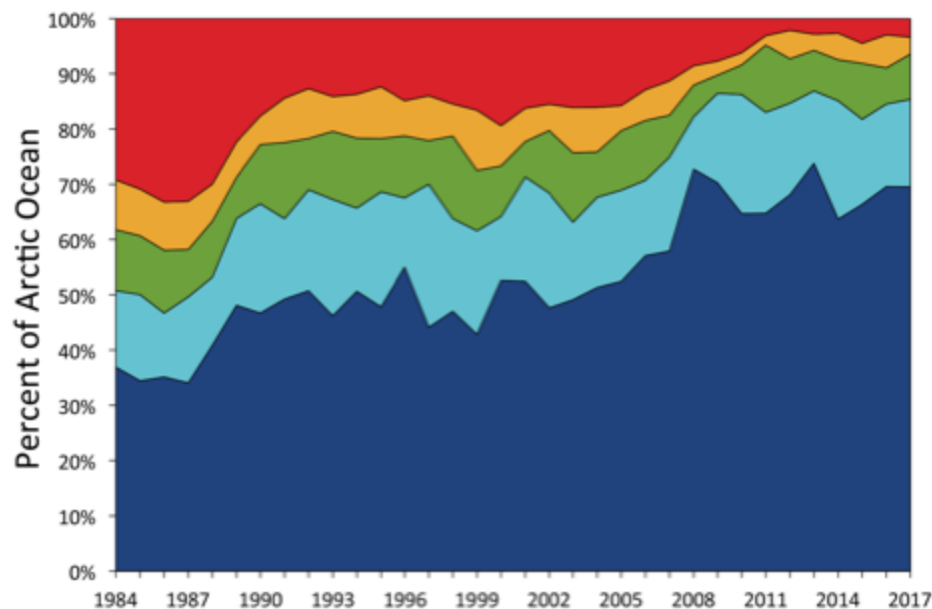


Figure 11- Arctic sea ice age profile from 1985-2017.

The trend as can be seen from the analyses above was for less Arctic sea ice extent, less sea ice volume and younger and younger sea ice year by year. When all these trends are combined we will find that in the near future (2025-2035) – I project the Arctic will be ice free in September and over time that ice free period will grow more and more prevalent and of longer duration with implications that we will examine next. Older thinner ice is subject to faster melting and easier break up by winds and movement of ships in the Arctic (an effect that should be quantified with increased Arctic tourism and commercial traffic by greater numbers of very large ocean going vessels each year).

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF ARCTIC SEA ICE MELT

Implications of Arctic changes will bring about effects on world temperatures wrought by changes in the Arctic jet stream.

Arctic Ice Melt & The Jet Stream

Changes in the jet stream from the disappearance of arctic sea ice will cause extreme impacts not only in the United State but thousands of miles away from the Arctic) (Figure 12). These effects will be more severe storm events, more severe droughts with resultant impacts on water availability and the world's food supply.

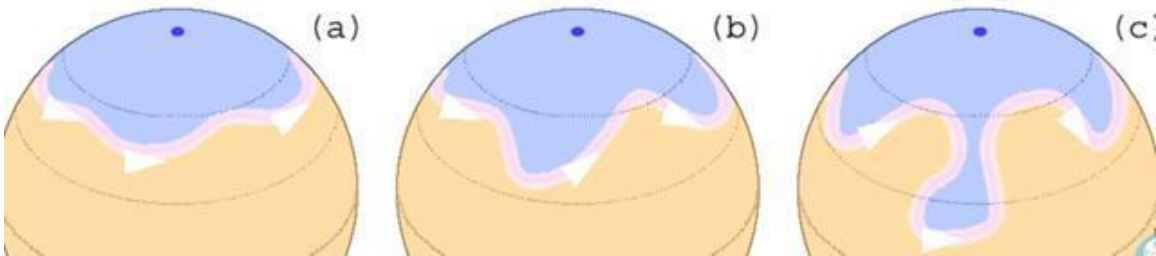


Figure 12: Normal Jet Stream Pattern A vs disrupted Rossby-type pattern C. During winter, C is often the result of warmer air disrupting, weakening and/or collapsing the polar vortex. Image source: see Commons also see <https://robertscribbler.com/2014/01/08/cold-snap-for-us-its-the-global-warming-induced-collapsing-polar-vortex-stupid/> - put into browser to open).

The Arctic as it becomes more and more ice free will reflect less and less sunlight and the oceans will warm. With ice and snow cover the Arctic Ocean would only absorb 10% of the heat energy entering the atmosphere but without snow and ice cover 94% of the heat energy would be absorbed by the ocean (Figure 13). This increasing heat in the Arctic Ocean creates a feedback loop where more heat leads to less sea ice of decreasing volume and decreasing age and less ice leads to more heat absorption in the Arctic Ocean with potentially unstable weather patterns occurring impacting continental areas around the world.

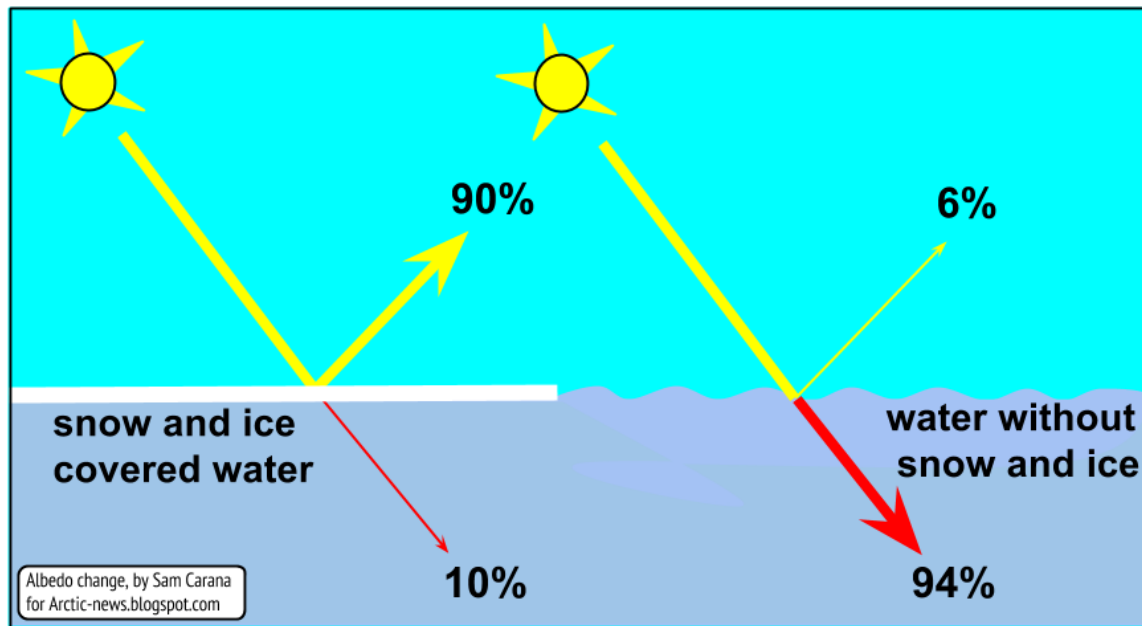


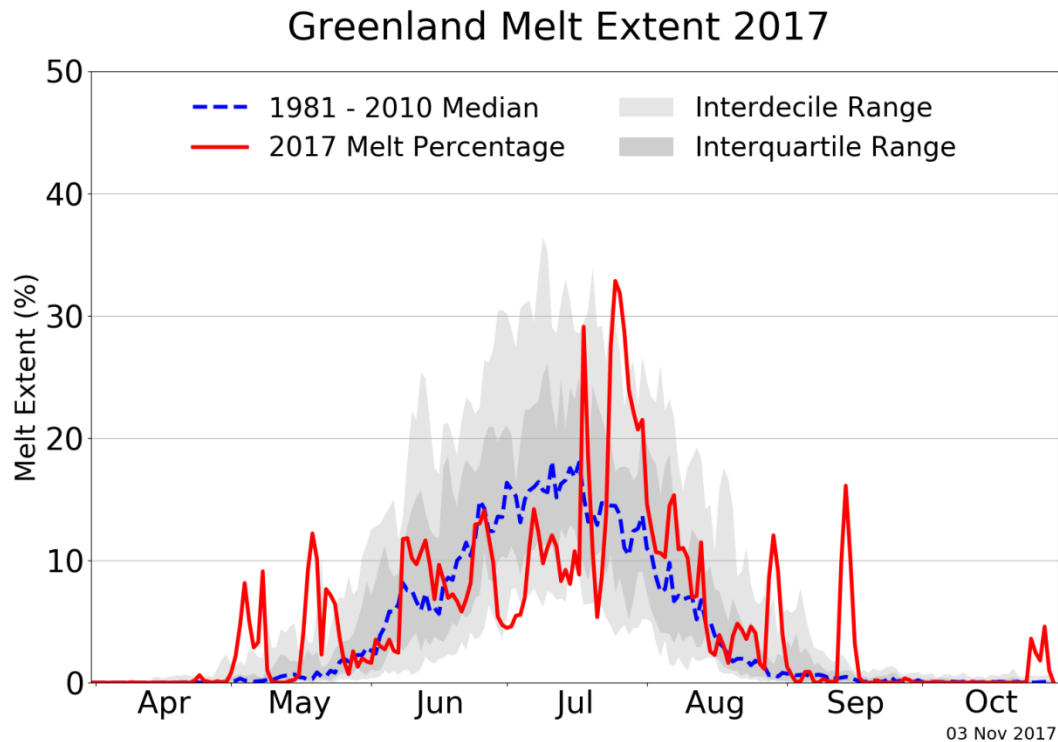
Figure 13: Arctic Ocean heat reflected by snow and ice and potential of heat entering the ocean which would be ice free.

The problem with less and less sea ice that is of less and less volume and younger ice the heating effect will result at some point in a potentially ice free Arctic year far sooner than climate projections forecast.

You may find the following graphic at the following web site interesting as to the accumulated heat the earth is absorbing as time progresses without reduction of human caused climate change.

http://skepticalscience.net/widgets/heat_widget/iphone.htm - heat widget

Melting sea ice does not result directly in sea level rise but the potential is as the Arctic warms that more and more of the continental ice shelf in Greenland will melt (Figure 14) which will result in increased sea level rise.



NSIDC / Thomas Mote, University of Georgia

Figure 14: Greenland Ice Sheet melt extent 2017

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO ME AND WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT

In 2011, Massachusetts Institute of Technology estimated that the average American emitted 20 tons of carbon/year and that the lower level of carbon emission for all classes of Americans from the homeless to the multimillionaire was 8.5 tons/year of carbon emissions/year

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/04/080428120658.htm> . So what does this mean for Arctic Sea Ice melt. Figure 15, estimates that for every ton of carbon emissions that 3 square meters of sea ice is lost in the Arctic. That means that most people in the US are responsible for 60 square meters of sea ice melt per year.

Sea Ice and CO₂

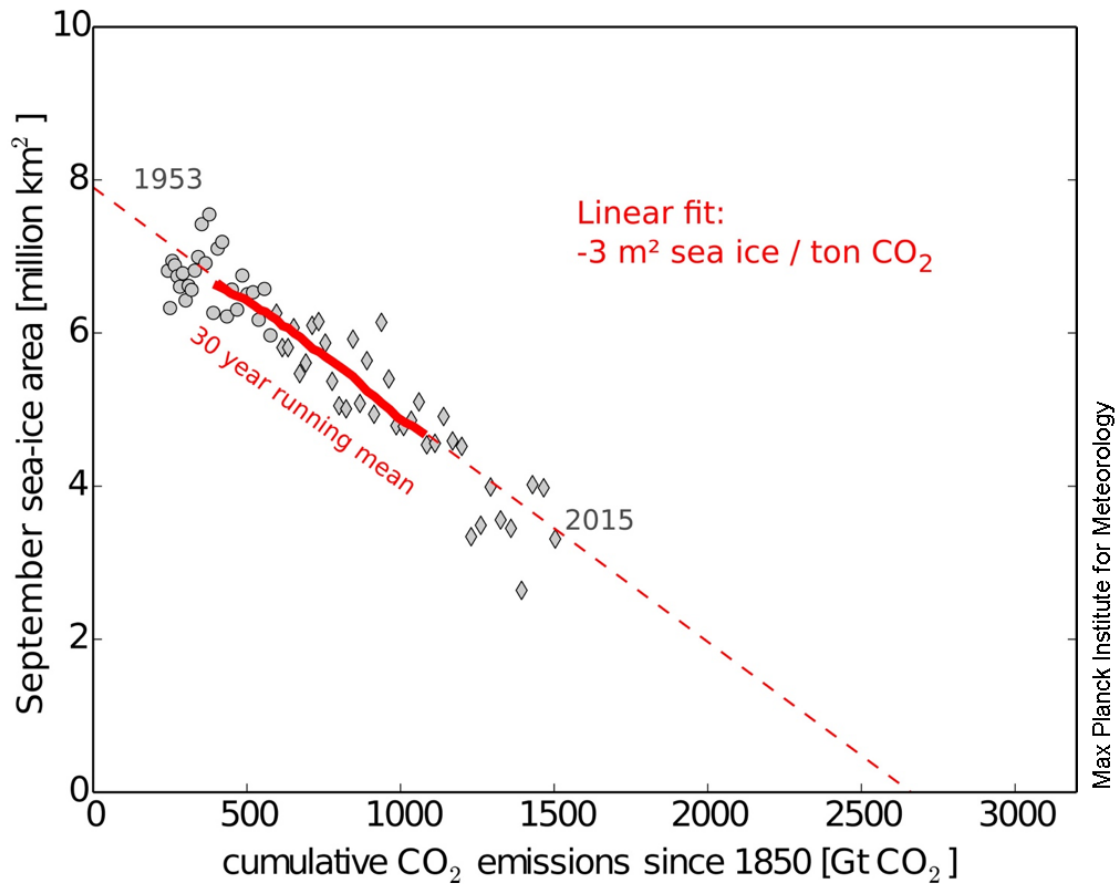


Figure 15: Sea Ice melt per ton of carbon emissions

Each person has an impact on climate change from individual lifestyles. Many resent being told that their lifestyle impacts the very future of the planet and will resist any change that may be necessary to avert a global crisis that will occur if current trends continue. The implications are more political than scientific. But for those who wish to reduce their impact on climate change there are many websites dedicated to this which I will not list here- just put into Google – search terms for that but here is what I think needs to be done:

1. Eliminate as much as possible worldwide usage of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas).
Implement as quickly as possible usage of renewable energy on as great a scale as fast as possible (alternative energy sources of all types- wind, solar, tidal energy, passive solar heating and cooling, energy efficient transportation- including very efficient public transportation networks, bioenergy, explore safe nuclear options (controversial for many), extremely highly efficient personal transport (bikes, electric and hybrid cars, car sharing, and perhaps self driving shared electric cars (controversial to some), carpools, ride sharing- (screened

community ride sharing site for passengers both to offer rides and to attain rides for work and leisure- in other words as many people per vehicle as possible).

2. Try to achieve a life style that is as much carbon neutral as possible and help others to do so also- if you have a large carbon emitting lifestyle do whatever is possible to reduce that impact elsewhere- help others for instance to put in alternative energy sources.
3. Eat as much locally as possible- grow your own food, community gardens, co-op farms, intentional communities, probably many others that do not pop into my mind).
4. More work at home options that will reduce commute times- and yes potentially artificial intelligence systems and robotics that would reduce commuting work weeks (potentially controversial as to how wealth would be distributed with these new technologies that will become more and more prevalent in the future).
5. Carbon sequestration and carbon capture – (an area of needed research and potential usage if these areas can be exploited in the future but any attempt at geo-engineering may have unforeseen consequences).
6. Exploration of carbon marketing ideas that could be implemented in a meaningful way to reduce global carbon emissions.
7. More efficient homes- lighting (look to buy the most energy efficient light bulbs as possible), heating and cooling systems, appliances, newer efficient thermostats, insulation, solar (solar roofs a new potential)- newer homes should be as close to carbon neutral as possible, unplug gadgets when you can so they are not zombie energy users, water systems that use solar water heating where possible and if not then on-demand water heating, dry your clothes outside on a line, spend less time in shower and turn off water when not needed, use insulated curtains in winter- if you cannot find them to buy get with others to make them, use full loads of clothes in washers and as low a temperature as possible for the wash water, rainwater harvesting from roofs, plant trees for screening of incoming sun in summer, community off-roof solar and wind options where people can buy shares for their energy uses and donate funds for others to do likewise.
8. Reuse and recycle things- thrift shops and flea markets and it is fun also to find things that are old but usable.
9. Get involved with others for change to systems local, regional, and internationally that would reduce carbon emissions- that may mean working however you dislike it for political change where that is possible.
10. Chose a digital environment as much as possible to reduce printing, permitting home work environment versus commuting work environment or shared satellite work sites where people can commute short distance- distributed work sites (especially solar powered digital devices where batteries can be charged when not used by roll out solar devices so the laptop – smartphone- digital reader etc. is truly solar powered and not plugged into the grid. This brings to mind the huge digital networks- these should be as much as possible powered by solar and wind power and designed to be in energy saving buildings and environments- perhaps earth sheltered or buried temperature constant environments.
11. There are probably many other ideas that can be thought of – get with others and brainstorm these in your community (church, office, school etc.)

Links

Pax Christi International
<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.
<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas
<http://www.paxchristitexas.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio
<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative
www.msjc.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee
<http://saccvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center
<http://www.sanantoniopace.center>

Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)
<http://www.interfaithradio.org/>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org