SLIDES: Climate Change and ... the Future of the American West

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Climate change and …
the Future of the American West

which, of course, is tied to the future of the American east, north and south and the rest of the globe
“The accumulation of GHGs is a moral issue”

V.P. Gore, 2006

“Global warming is the great hoax perpetrated on mankind”

Sen. Inhofe (R-OK)

“One man’s ceiling is another man’s floor”

Paul Simon, 1973

But...whose morality will prevail?
Climate Politics

- Greenhouse effect vs White House effect
  - Turnabout is fair play
- Conservation vs exploitation
- Technophiles vs -phobes
- Dependence on free market mechanisms
“Gentlemen, it’s time we gave some serious thought to the effects of global warming.”

Production Head
http://www.cartoonbank.com

http://www.undoit.org/graphics/New Yorker Cartoon.jpg
Climate Ethics and Equity

• Generational equity
  • (Intra- and Inter-generational)

• Environmental justice
  • (Downwind; Downstream)

• Natural disasters and poverty
  • (the poor tend to live in high-risk zones)

• Polluter Pays
  • (Unless you are the polluter)

• Precautionary Principle
  • (“better safe now than sorry later”)

• Nature’s Bank analogy
  • (everyone knows about banks !! )
Size matters: CO2 emissions

Contributions to Global Warming
Areas are proportional to historic carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion, 1900–1999

INDUSTRIALIZED
DEVELOPING

Underlying data sources:
United States Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration and the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center

World Resources Institute
http://www.wri.org/ 1-202-729-7600

Map by Equator Graphics, Inc.
Where CO2 emissions come from
(total emissions since 1950 in billions of tons)
Winners and losers in global warming

Report of the Workshop

"On Assessing Winners and Losers in the Context of Global Warming"

St. Julians, Malta 18 - 21 June 1990
Daily burden to fetch water and firewood

Africa – water gatherers

India – firewood gatherers
Hurricane Mitch refugees
(Oct.-Nov. 1998)

LATIN AMERICA

Flooded out of her Honduran home in October 1998 by fearsome Hurricane Mitch, Marita Fonseca and her six children have been living ever since in the El Trebol refugee camp on a bulldozed hilltop in Tegucigalpa, between two highway off-ramps. Garbage fires smolder in the midst of environmental refugees.

Millions of Latin Americans are being displaced, not by poverty or civil strife, but by the devastating effects of nature. The numbers will keep growing.

Photograph by Paul Hewitt/Liaison
Refugees at the Earnest Morial Convention Center (August 31, 2005)

Hurricane Katrina

Is this a specter of the future for industrialized countries?

Staff photo by Ted Jackson
Attributing responsibility for disasters

A new role for climate...

as a scapegoat for societal problems

Nobody wants to take the blame!
There is a “Lessons Learned” problem

- Lessons are identified after each disaster

- Why are lessons that are allegedly learned not applied?

  - In fact, lessons are identified but often not learned!!
Render unto climate …

1. Identify climate’s impacts on societies

and

2. Identify society’s contribution to those impacts
Global warming is a hoax! This water is just way too cold.