

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 7

AUGUST 2017



MOLLY HOLLAR, LEFT, WITH ROSA FINLEY — SEE PAGE 8

August Meeting

Grassroots environmental campaigns for a liveable Arlington

Ranjana Bhandari

**Special
Meeting
Place**

Wednesday, August 2, 7 pm
Lake House at Richard Simpson Park
6300 W Arkansas Lane

**Special
Meeting
Place**

Ranjana will discuss some of her group's efforts in the last two years, including the recent Save Lake Arlington campaign against the Bluestone injection well, and look at local issues of concern that her group wants to work on in the future. See <http://www.acctexas.org/meetings/> for details and map.

Ranjana Bhandari is a longtime Arlington resident with a Master's in Economics from Brown University. She was an Economics Professor and then a stay-at-home mother when drilling arrived in Arlington. She founded Liveable Arlington in January 2015 because she had serious concerns about pollution from gas drilling and its detrimental effects upon our residents. Ranjana is a member of the Core Advisory Board of the national organization, Halt The Harm, "a people-powered network connecting leaders and supporters in the movement to halt the harms of fracking, to solve problems, collaborate, share ideas and inspire each other to halt gas development's impact on our families, communities and environment."

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From the President Jan Miller

Gratitude. Despite a year that seems to bring new perils, especially environmental ones almost daily, there's still been much to be grateful for. Many philosophies and religions talk about the usefulness of practicing gratitude: While focusing on the good, anxieties and losses are dimmed, and resolve strengthened. I've been reading Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, but I didn't expect to find gratitude braided throughout. The author is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, a mother, a professional botanist, a teacher, keen observer and gifted storyteller. She recounts indigenous creation stories and explores ecological relationships, finding continued themes of reciprocity, gratitude, and responsibility: "...old stories and new ones that can be medicine for our broken relationship with earth, a pharmacopoeia of healing stories that allow us to imagine a different relationship, in which people and land are good medicine for each other."

<https://www.amazon.com/Robin-Wall-Kimmerer/e/B001KIHUZE>

Closer to home, here's a recent gem for the gratitude journal: Molly Hollar's retirement celebration. Be sure to read more about the tribute to Molly in this issue.

And one to look forward to: August 17. That's the date when average high temperatures begin to drop with the approach of fall.

Don't forget, we're trying a new location for ACC's August meeting: APRD's Lake House at Richard Simpson Park on Arkansas Lane. Much more in this August issue, thanks to many of you and to our devoted editors. Enjoy!



ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service, and advocacy for a sustainable future

Published 10 times a year by
Arlington Conservation Council
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76004-0216.

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15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
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Bits & Pieces

National Drive Electric Week

September 9, 2017 at Grapevine Mills Mall

Calling all EV owners: Come show off your electric vehicle and be part of the Texas record for the most EVs in one place. If you're considering an EV, come take a test drive and learn from owners. Activities, giveaways, ride and drives, and more! www.DFWCleanCities.org

<http://www.greensourcedfw.org/articles/drive-green-electric-vehicle-expo-be-held-grapevine>



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Board blows it

Last week a *Star-Telegram* editorial (Big-city mayors talk with Abbott: It's about time) mentioned that our mayor will be among those meeting Friday with the governor. The authors got some things right but trivialized the importance of trees, so Grace Darling fired off the following:

Dear Editors:

The editorial board is wrong to dismiss tree preservation ordinances as "petty local matters" and "a question of aesthetics." In fact, the economic value of trees is well documented: trees shade and cool the environment, clean the air of toxic pollutants, and retard and filter storm water runoff to help retain topsoil and lessen silting of streams and ponds. These natural ecologic services impact residents across a wide area, not just under the canopy, and translate into millions of taxpayer dollars being spent to make up for the lost trees. The health of our urban and suburban trees should be a major concern to all, and especially in our rapidly dwindling Cross Timbers region where post oaks, once removed, are gone forever.



Hey, get it off me!

Maybe your editor has somehow developed robber fly blindness, even though Texas has about 250 species of these remarkable predators. The little story goes like this: In a 1965 Entomology class you catch a bunch and stick them on pins. Then ignore them until 2017 when a big one lands on your back and callous bystanders calmly discuss it instead of saving you from its fearsome bite. Now two more are hanging around, including this possible southern bee killer that mimics bumblebees. Gotta pay more attention.



Photo Kim Conrow

Inspiration

The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.

Wendell Berry

**Join us and act locally.
Use the handy
application form
on the back page.**

Sparrow Nest John Blair

The sparrows' giddy enthusiasm
For endless mating
Makes them see the sloping shingles
Over the patio door
As a perfect platform for nest
building.

Straw, grass, plastic, rags,
Flower stalks, fur,
All get dragged across the lawn
And up the house side
To be jammed among the
Rest of the mess —
Beautiful in bird brains as
Superb spring housing.

Then begins egg hatching
In the heart of the bulging bundle;
Many roll and go
Splat on the concrete six feet below;
Occasionally the entire nest
Slides suddenly free,
Spends a moment in the air
And startles a lunching squirrel
When it lands.

But sometimes even
Silly birds get it right
And shelter naked nestlings
Snug from storms
Until it's time for flight.

* * *

Only I lament awhile
The flight school failures
Who crash onto the steps
And give them decent burial
In the compost pile.

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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



Take a course in good water
and air; and in the eternal
youth of Nature you may
renew your own. Go quietly,
alone; no harm will befall you.

John Muir



Outdoor cats and birds

There's plenty of bad news to go around of course, but here's some we really can't ignore, especially if we have cats and let them go outdoors. Here's a bit of an [article](#) from the *Washington Post* by Juliet Eilperin in January 2013:

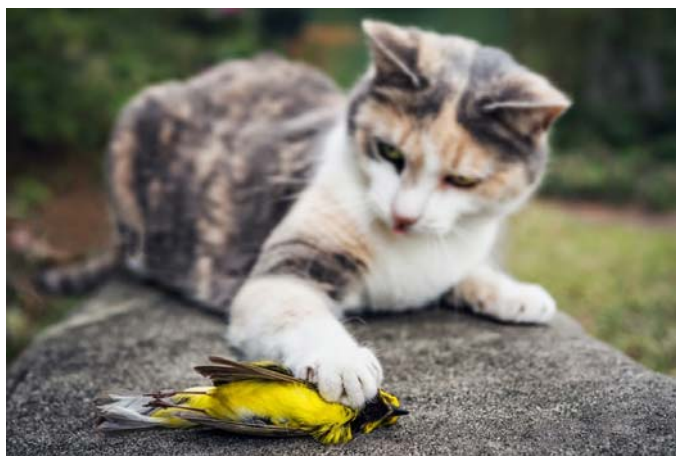
Outdoor cats kill between 1.4 billion and 3.7 billion birds a year, study says

[Outdoor cats](#) are the leading cause of death among both birds and mammals in the United States, according to a [new study](#), killing 1.4 billion to 3.7 billion birds each year. The mammalian toll is even higher, concluded researchers from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ranging from 6.9 billion to 20.7 billion annually.

The analysis, published Tuesday in the journal *Nature Communications*, suggests that feral and owned cats pose a far greater threat than previously thought. One study in 2011 estimated that cats in the United States kill roughly half a billion birds annually.

Peter P. Marra, the paper's senior author and a research scientist at the Smithsonian Institution, said he and his colleagues "pulled together all the best estimates" from 90 studies to reach their estimate, taking into account the difference in behavior between owned and unowned cats.

"I don't think there's ever been an attempt like this," Marra said in a telephone interview, adding that the new estimate is "conservative."



Sperry Watch

Star-Telegram columns by the Garden Guru (Neil Sperry) have a way of accumulating at the executive offices of the *Post Oak*, because, despite his horticultural expertise, Mr Sperry says unhappy things about native plants at every opportunity. And he really seems to like all those chemicals you simply must have after filling your yard with exotic plants. Here are some bits (heavily edited) from various more or less recent columns:

The Good

(Really, this is the Guru speaking, not the editor being snide.)

Goldenrod: It's not ragweed, it's handsome and good for pollinators.

Oaks: Plant them instead of fast-growing exotic trees.

And some oaks (live, Shumard red, chinquapin, and bur) even grow fairly fast with good water and nutrition.

Virginia creeper: It's not poison ivy; don't kill it because you think it is.

Plants that attract bees: Quit being afraid of bees, they're critical. We need them. Don't spray them.

The Bad

In July, plant crape myrtles and a mess of annual color stuff, all exotics except lantanas. And watch out for Chinch bugs in St Augustine (use insecticide), lace bugs (use insecticide), leafrollers (use insecticide), gray leaf spot (use fungicide), rose rosette virus (no cure; dig those roses up, put them in trash bags and send them to the landfill. *Editor: Or maybe just don't plant exotic roses.*)

The Ugly

Native plants: "I vote a qualified 'No.'" The Guru does say that it's a big category and some are better adapted here than others (duh) and that "...a plant is native only where it grows in nature." Yeah, so maybe the Native Plant Society of Texas isn't completely stupid. Despite the oddity of his reasoning, Mr Sperry's "...vote goes to adapted." Which must include all the native plants that have evolved to thrive here. So there.

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Noted American photographer Diane Arbus said taking pictures is like “tiptoeing into the kitchen late at night and stealing Oreo cookies.” What an enticing image!

A problem arises, though, when it is your kitchen/garden that is being invaded and your carefully tended flowers stolen.

Photographers visualize pictures and sometimes go to great lengths to capture the image on film. Molly Hollar once encountered a photographer who moved a full-sized couch into the middle of the inland sea oats. Even after hearing how her actions damaged the foliage, the photographer was reluctant to take the couch away.

Josephine Keeney interrupted a professional who directed two children to sit in chairs at a table



she had placed among the blue-bonnets. The photographer was surprised that trampling the flowers upset anyone.

Friends of the Wildscape volunteers decided to put up signs urging people to stay out of the flow-

erbeds. Several options were considered, among them:

“Trespassers will be Composted.”

“Feel Free to Talk to These Plants, Just Don’t Walk with ’Em.”

“Employees Only. All Others Will Be Pruned, Propagated or Replanted.”

Rather than being clever or circumspect, the chosen signs are simple and direct. “Please Stay Off the Plants!”

After a week, six movable signs were still standing in their original locations.

Will this protect the flowers from unwanted invasion? Stay tuned.



Molly Hollar Appreciation



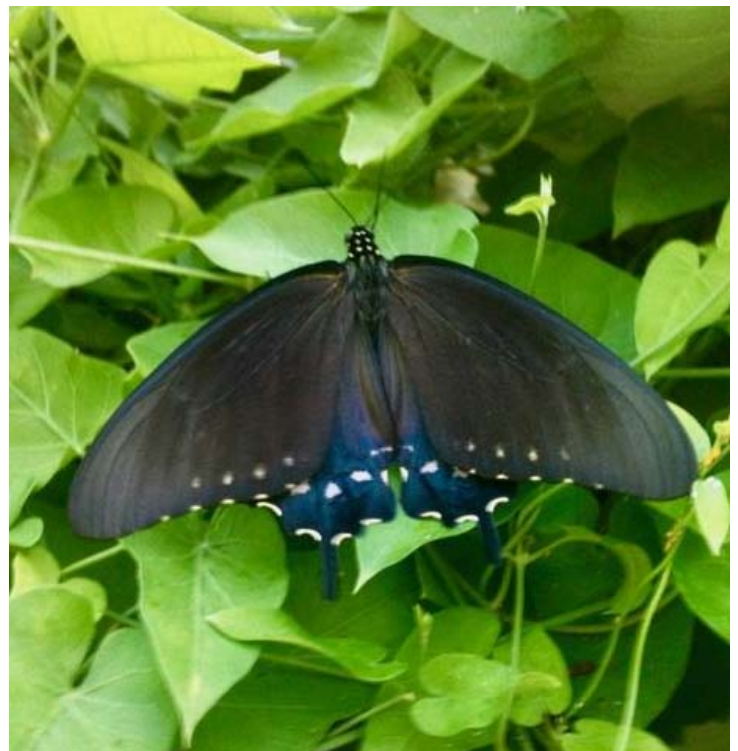
On July 23, Friends of the Wildscape gave Molly Hollar's many fans an opportunity to thank her for all her years of leadership, time, hard work, and remarkable staying power. Molly's focus was the native plants that have given life to a once forlorn patch of land in Veterans Park, but her message has always reached far beyond that — goodness, pure and simple.



Pipevine swallowtail Photos by Josephine Keeney

Last month we were treated to butterfly tours and talks at the Fielder House Museum butterfly garden, and now Josephine has provided photos of one of her charges that has recently emerged.

Surely the pipevine swallowtail is one of our most elegant butterflies. This beauty has a huge range, may have three or more broods a year here, and both larvae and adults are poisonous as a result of feeding on pipevine and related plants. It is mimicked by a number of butterflies, including dark-morph eastern tiger swallowtail, black swallowtail, and red-spotted purple. *Top left*, larva. *Top right*, chrysalis. *Bottom*, adult pipevine swallowtail.



Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting Free and open to the public Tuesday, August 15

Eagle Scout Project Update David White

Thanks to everyone who contributed to make the goal for David White's Eagle Scout project! David is away at Philmont, but will be able to order materials and begin working on completing the trailhead kiosk construction and posting trail markers when he returns.

West Arlington Police Service Center Community Room
2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76013

Parking is available in front of the building, via Ron McAndrew Drive.

Coming Up

September 14 – North Texas Giving Day

Green Arlington Foundation has once again designated the Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve as the beneficiary of its NTx Giving Day donations. Stay tuned for more details next month.

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org.

Participants brave the summer heat to learn about our local birds at the beginning birdwatching class at the preserve on July 15. Photo by J. M. Domke.



Climate Change 101 – Part I: Political History Grace Darling

NASA's home page says it clearly: “Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97% or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: Climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities.” <https://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/>

So, given this overwhelming scientific consensus, what progress have we made in combating the planetary warming that threatens our continued existence? Below I will briefly review the environmental milestones, political events, and personalities that have shaped government policies regarding climate change in the U.S. since World War II.

In 1958, Cal Tech/Scripps Institution of Oceanography geochemist **Charles David Keeling** began systematic measurements of atmospheric CO₂ at Mauna Loa in Hawaii and in Antarctica. Within 4 years, the project - which continues today - provided the first unequivocal proof that carbon dioxide concentrations are rising. The **Keeling Curve** measures the progressive buildup of CO₂, a greenhouse gas, in the atmosphere, and Keeling is generally credited with first alerting the world to the possibility of anthropogenic contribution to the “greenhouse effect” of rising CO₂ levels.

Another reluctant “father of global warming” is **Wallace Broecker** of Columbia University, a man who has been at the forefront of climate

research since the 1970s. Broecker is best known for his discovery of the ocean “conveyor belts” that play an important role in regulating the earth’s temperature. His 450 published journal articles and 10 books have also contributed to a greater understanding of the complexities of the carbon cycle and the role of glaciers in regulating the earth’s temperature. Broecker’s science predicts that when the planet warms overall, dry areas will become warmer and dryer while tropical, rainy areas will get wetter. The Midwest can expect more heat and damaging swings between flooding and drought.

In 1965, **President Lyndon Johnson's** Advisory Committee warned that the greenhouse effect was a matter of “real concern.” “Air pollution is no longer confined to isolated places,” said Johnson less than three weeks after his 1965 inauguration. “This generation has altered the composition of the atmosphere on a global scale through radioactive materials and a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels,” warned the president, and within the year he would sign six new environmental protection laws. Despite the strife associated with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, Great Society programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Head Start, and the escalation of the Vietnam War, Johnson also managed to establish a dozen new national monuments, historic sites, and recreation areas, and submitted a draft nuclear non-

proliferation treaty to the United Nations — all in *that year*. <http://www.dailyclimate.org/tdc-newsroom/2015/02/president-johnson-carbon-climate-warning>

On November 5, 1965, President Johnson’s White House released “**Restoring the Quality of our Environment**,” a report that described the impacts of climate change and foretold dramatic Antarctic ice sheet loss, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. The warnings and predictions given to Johnson from his science team proved remarkably prescient: Coal, oil, and natural gas burning would lift atmospheric carbon dioxide between 14% and 30% by the year 2000, the panel estimated. In fact, **CO₂ increased** 15.5% by 2000, and was 25% higher (in 2015) than in 1965. Though “climate scientists are still arguing about the details, ... knowledgeable people have agreed about the fundamentals for a long time,” states Ken Caldeira, an atmospheric scientist from the Carnegie Institution.

What's happened since then, you may ask? **President Richard Nixon's** environmental achievements (see inset) are largely “lost in Watergate's wake,” says a blogger in *Climate Central* [Aug 8, 2012]. To that famous incident you can add the highly unpopular Vietnam War and its shameful end, the Kent State massacre, bombings in Cambodia, etc., etc. Repeated attempts by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then urban affairs advisor to the president and later

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senator from New York, to involve the Nixon administration in combating the impending disaster of global warming fell on the deaf ears of a presidency mired in conflict and scandal.

On July 15, 1979, **President Jimmy Carter** gave his “Crisis of Confidence” (aka American malaise) speech in which he stressed that our energy supply controls our destiny, whether it's in the hands of petro-states, coal barons, or solar entrepreneurs, and called on the country to make painful but necessary sacrifices to deal with that fact. “Energy,” he said, “will be the immediate test of our ability to unite this nation, and it can also be the standard around which we rally.” However correct he may have been on that point, “Carter's manifesto was hardly an attack on the fossil fuel industry. He called for energy conservation mandates and improved public transportation, but he also urged increased reliance on coal, touted the promise of domestic shale oil, and promised to remove environmental obstacles to oil refinery construction. ... Alas, Americans were no more in the mood to be lectured about driving 55 or cutting down on unnecessary trips than they are today.” [Peter Dykstra, *The Daily Climate*, July 15, 2014] Between the energy crisis and the taking of American hostages by Iran that year, Carter never had a chance and in November lost to Reagan by a landslide. “Both the policies and the symbolic White House solar array were soon memories.” [ibid.]

Richard M. Nixon's green legacy

— **The National Environmental Policy Act** (1969), which among other things required that all federal agencies produce **environmental impact statements** on the possible negative effects of any and all regulations. It also created the **President's Council on Environmental Quality**.

— The **Environmental Protection Agency** (1970). Self-explanatory. Amazing.

— **The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA, 1970). Proposed by Nixon “...for better protection of life and property from natural hazards...for a better understanding of the total environment...[and] for exploration and development leading to the intelligent use of our marine resources...” That's what he wanted, and that's what the agency does.

— **The Clean Air Act** (1970). Before the act, America's skies were filthy. Afterward, they weren't exactly pristine, but they were dramatically better, and later amendments cleaned the air up even more.

— **Earth Week** (1971). OK, something of a gimmick, but still, Nixon endorsed it to commemorate the first anniversary of **Earth Day**. He **may not have sported Birkenstocks**, but in some ways the man was practically a tree-hugger.

— **The Clean Water Act** (1972). If this is beginning to sound like the green legislation hall of fame, it's not just you.

President Ronald Reagan was no environmentalist, but he had a keen ear for what the public wanted and tried to deliver it: American supremacy. “If you look at the history of climate change negotiations, actually it was initiated by the **IPCC** [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] with the support of the Republicans during the Reagan and senior Bush administration during the late 1980s.” [David Iaconangelo, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 15, 2016] The idea for a global body dedicated to fighting climate change was initially rejected by the Reagan administration in 1985. Two years later, though, international bureaucrats went ahead and launched their own version of

the global climate-change body. In response, the administration did a rapid about-face and Pres. Reagan overrode objections within his own cabinet to a major proposed treaty of American design to protect the ozone layer — the IPCC. The IPCC was charged with collating and assessing evidence on climate change.

One Reagan-era initiative on climate change, signed into effect as the 1989 **Montreal Protocol**, is often seen as a model for bipartisan global-warming action due to what *The New York Times* once called its “**pragmatic, business-friendly principles**.” That global treaty phased out the production of com-

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monly used industrial chemicals found to be responsible for destroying the ozone layer. Though not established with climate change in mind, it has had a greater impact on greenhouse gas emissions than the Kyoto Protocol.

Both Reagan and **President George H.W. Bush** actively promoted measures to combat climate change, for pragmatic reasons. Recently declassified documents from the Reagan and Bush 41 eras “reveal sharp contrast with today’s GOP on climate and the environment,” read *The Washington Post* headline. [Dec 3, 2015] The memos, stamped “confidential” and kept under wraps for years, portray a White House eager to assert U.S. leadership on climate change. Global warming will have “profound consequences,” one document warns. Both presidents and their senior State Department officials note that “global climate change is the most far reaching environmental issue of our time” and “if the climate change within the range of current predictions actually occurs, the consequences for every nation and every aspect of human activity will be profound.” Notwithstanding the need for continued research, “we simply cannot wait — the costs of inaction will be too high.” [Memorandum by Frederick M. Bernthal, Feb 9, 1989] William K. Reilly, former World Wildlife Fund director and EPA administrator 1989-1993, wonders “how climate became such a controversial question.”

“The United States is strongly committed to the IPCC process of international cooperation on global climate change. We consider it vital that the community of nations be drawn together ... to review the history of our global environment, to assess the potential for future climate change, and to develop effective programs. The state of the science, the social and economic impacts, and the appropriate strategies all are crucial components to a global resolution. The stakes here are very high; the consequences, very significant. ... Funding for the U.S. Global Change Research Program will increase by nearly 60%, to over \$1 billion. That commitment, by far the largest ever made by any nation, reflects our determination to improve our understanding of the science of climate change.” [Pres. George H. W. Bush, in an address to the IPCC, Feb 5, 1990]

In 1992, during the last months of Bush senior's term, the largest group of world leaders in history met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in what became known as the **Rio Earth Summit**. <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/envirp2.html> Bush and others called on the world to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions by 2000 at the 1990 level, especially CO₂. The U.S. and other nations ratified this convention. Importantly, Bush negotiated an agreement to allow developing nations to be excluded from the restriction, since industrialized countries are the overwhelming contributors to the troubling emissions.

While the Bush I administration and the United Nations were moving ahead in the early 90s to establish an international framework to control global warming, **domestic opponents** of strong curbs on greenhouse emissions had grown in number and strength, producing the coalition of Republican political leaders and industrial interests that are so prominent today.

Both Pres. Bush senior and **Pres. Bill Clinton** helped to negotiate the **Kyoto Protocol**, designed to establish a worldwide commitment to control atmospheric pollution and reduce the buildup of gases that cause global warming. <http://www.oecd.org/env/cc/39111309.pdf>

“The greatest environmental challenge of the new century is global warming... If we fail to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, deadly heat waves and droughts will become more frequent, coastal areas will flood, and economies will be disrupted. That is going to happen, unless we act. Many people... still believe you cannot cut greenhouse gas emissions without slowing economic growth. In the Industrial Age that may well have been true. But in this digital economy, it is not true anymore. New technologies make it possible to cut harmful emissions and provide even more growth.”

— President Bill Clinton, State of the Union Address, January 27, 2000

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“The Clinton administration came to office in 1993 determined to restore the United States as the preeminent global protector of the environment, but saw its hopes for a major climate treaty run aground on a series of international and domestic political and procedural setbacks,” reports historian Robert Wampler. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB537-Clinton-White-House-Frustrated-in-Attempts-to-Forge-US-Global-Leadership-on-Climate-Change-in-1990s/> The efforts of the Clinton administration to provide renewed global leadership in this changed political environment ran aground when “a laundry list of differences arose among key international constituencies. Questions ranged from how ambitious the targets for greenhouse gas emission cuts should be, to the **respective obligations of developing and developed countries**, especially the **roles of China and India**.

Battles with Congress over priorities and possible effects on the American economy and productivity further agitated the waters. Even before the landmark Kyoto talks of 1997, the administration found itself obliged to give up many of its ‘most cherished ideas’ and to look instead for ‘fallback’ options across the board,” writes Wampler. [ibid.]

Notably, China felt the U.S. proposals regarding developing countries went too far, and that priority should be given to reducing the developed world's greenhouse gas emissions, while at home criticism was mounting that the proposed

treaty would not go far enough in establishing targets for the developing world. At the end of the day, the developing countries issue, particularly with respect to China and India, would be the Achilles heel for the Kyoto Protocol in the U.S. The Clinton administration would not even submit the protocol to Congress for ratification, knowing it was doomed.

In 2001, newly inaugurated **President George W. Bush** announced that the Kyoto agreement's mandatory reductions in greenhouse gases and short timetable would be too expensive and unwise when the U.S. was facing energy problems. The same year the U.S. left the Kyoto process, IPCC Third Assessment Report found “new and stronger evidence” that humanity's emissions of greenhouse gases are the main cause of the warming seen in the second half of the 20th century.

A new climate change strategy for the United States announced by Bush II in 2002 set a voluntary “greenhouse gas intensity” target for the nation, expanded existing programs encouraging companies to voluntarily report and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and proposed increased federal funding for climate change science and technology development. Objective analysis of the strategy showed that while some elements of the administration's strategy might have provided additional incentive to companies to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the administration's target — an 18% reduction in emissions

intensity between now and 2012 — would allow *actual* emissions to increase 12% over the same period. Emissions would continue to grow at nearly the same rate as before.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, since taking office Bush “consistently sought to undermine the view held by the vast majority of climate scientists that human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases are making a discernible contribution to global warming. ... Despite promises by the president that ‘my administration’s climate change policy will be science-based,’ [Bush's term saw] widespread political interference in the work of federal climate scientists, edits to official scientific documents, and a general attempt to foster uncertainty about robust scientific conclusions.”* Through such underhanded tactics and a focus on uncertainty, the Bush administration avoided fashioning any policies that would significantly reduce the threat of global warming.

Hopes were high when **President Barack Obama** took office in January 2009, but the historical record is muddled by a series of compromises and mixed messages by the Obama administration. In his first term, Obama used the stimulus money to promote green technology and strong-armed Detroit to make cars that delivered higher gas mileage, while at the same time opening the Arctic's Beauford Sea for offshore drilling and trying to sell Wyoming's

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Powder River Basin for mining and oil and gas exploration. In his second term, he fought for EPA regulations on new coal-fired power plants and promoted oil and gas drilling while negotiating an ambitious **Paris Agreement** with other international leaders “to give us the best chance to save the one planet we've got.”

While in Cushing, Oklahoma, in March 2012, Obama bragged that “Over the last three years, I've directed my administration to open up millions of acres for gas and oil exploration across 23 different states. We're opening up more than 75% of our potential oil resources offshore. We've quadrupled the number of operating rigs to a record high. We've added enough new oil and gas pipeline to encircle the Earth, and then some. . . . In fact, the problem . . . is that we're actually producing so much oil and gas . . . that we don't have enough pipeline capacity to transport all of it where it needs to go.”

On the other hand, the **President's Climate Action Plan** <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/image/president27climateaction-plan.pdf> released in June 2013 offers a detailed roadmap for dealing with the global warming crisis at the federal level. Some even call Obama America's first climate president, and list “the Clean Power Plan as one of his biggest accomplishments. By working with the EPA, he created the first ever carbon pollution standards for the largest source of pollution — power plants. He did this in the midst of a do-nothing congress

that fought him every step of the way. Under his presidency, we made huge investments in clean energy, which are paying off already. Jump starts to the wind and solar industry have led to enormous cost decreases — **dirty energy isn't cheaper anymore**. It is really astonishing — wind power has tripled and solar power has increased by 30 times since he took office. Under his presidency, we improved standards for fuel economy of our vehicles, which not only reduces pollution but also saves money. Furthermore, Obama set targets to reduce the federal government's emissions by nearly 20% by 2025. He has worked to reduce other types of greenhouse gases such as methane and hydrofluorocarbons, not only within the U.S. but through international agreements.” [John Abraham, *The Guardian*, Nov 2, 2016]

In an article published in *Rolling Stone* on December 17, 2013, Bill McKibben says, “If you want to understand how people will remember the Obama climate legacy, a few facts tell the tale: By the time Obama leaves office, the U.S. will pass Saudi Arabia as the planet's biggest oil producer and Russia as the world's biggest producer of oil and gas combined. In the same years, even as we've begun to burn less coal at home, our coal exports have climbed to record highs. We are, despite slight declines in our domestic emissions, a global-warming machine.” <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/obama-and->

[climate-change-the-real-story-20131217](#)

* For example, in May 2002 President Bush expressed disdain for a State Department report to the United Nations that pointed to a clear human role in the accumulation of heat-trapping gases and detailed the likely negative consequences of climate change; the president called it “a report put out by the bureaucracy.” Later that year, the administration removed a section on climate change from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) annual air pollution report, even though the climate issue had been discussed in the report in each of the preceding five years. And in 2003, the American Geophysical Union (AGU), the world's largest organization of earth scientists, released a statement describing human-caused disruptions of Earth's climate, yet Bush administration spokespersons contended that uncertainties in climate science were too great to warrant mandatory action to slow emissions. Scientists were also largely excluded from internal policy discussions relating to climate change, and environmental policy was made solely at the White House.

The 2007 report *Atmosphere of Pressure*, by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Government Accountability Project, extensively documents Bush administration efforts to manipulate the work of federal climate scientists and exercise strict control over which scientists were allowed to talk to the media and which scientific results were communicated to the public.

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