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The Best Climate Change Books (Happy Earth Day?)

Posted by Karma Bennett × April 22, 2015 at 9:30 am



Happy Earth Day! Let's take stock of where we're at in our ongoing relationship with Mother Nature. Let's see...a group of European scientists presented evidence that we can expect **severe floods to double in the next hundred years**. *The New York Times* reports that the **megadroughts in California (and much of the Midwest) will be the new normal for the next century**...that's not good—let's look at South America. The latest research shows the **Amazon rainforest isn't pulling in as much carbon as it used to**. OK, that's scary. How about Siberia...Apparently **Siberia is on fire**. And all this bad news just in the beginning of April!

Maybe it's not such a happy Earth Day after all. We have climate change to thank for all this and more. The **first three months of this year have been the hottest on record**, already set to beat **last year's record-breaking temperatures**.

But wait, isn't climate change about hotter summers and rising sea levels? If you don't understand

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what wildfires, droughts, floods have to do with climate change, it's time for you to read a good book. Or even if the phrase "**feedback loops**" doesn't give you a slight feeling of dread, it's time to read a good book. Because **climate changes isn't just the future, it's the here and now.**

Books About Climate Change

Where to begin? **Alibris offers more than five hundred books on climate change.** I could have put together this post based on books that I have read or authors I like, but this is such an important topic I wanted to be sure to point you towards the best books out there. So I asked climate researchers about their favorite books.

Merchants of Doubt

by **Naomi Oreskes** and **Dr. Erik M Conway**

Not that this list is in any kind of order, but I'm starting with *Merchants of Doubt* because three of the climate experts I queried point to it as their favorite.

The first is climate researcher Owen R. Liu. (If you want a children's book on climate change, Liu has written a middle-grade sci-fi mystery on the topic, *The Confounding Case of the Climate Crisis*). Liu describes *Merchants of Doubt* as enlightening, "especially in its discovery that a few high-powered, skillful lobbyists have hijacked the political discourse around climate, to the detriment of both scientific progress and the search for effective solutions. The book gave me a much deeper understanding of how and why we are still debating scientific facts in this country." Liu admires the way the book connects today's climate controversy with those in the past, such as debates on the ozone hole and the harmful effects of tobacco.

Michael Cote, a Climate Change Adaptation and Development Specialist based in Washington, DC, says *Merchants of Doubt* is his top pick too, calling it a "must-own book." Cote says, "There are a lot of different perspectives on how to 'resolve the climate crisis.' This book shows that the system is



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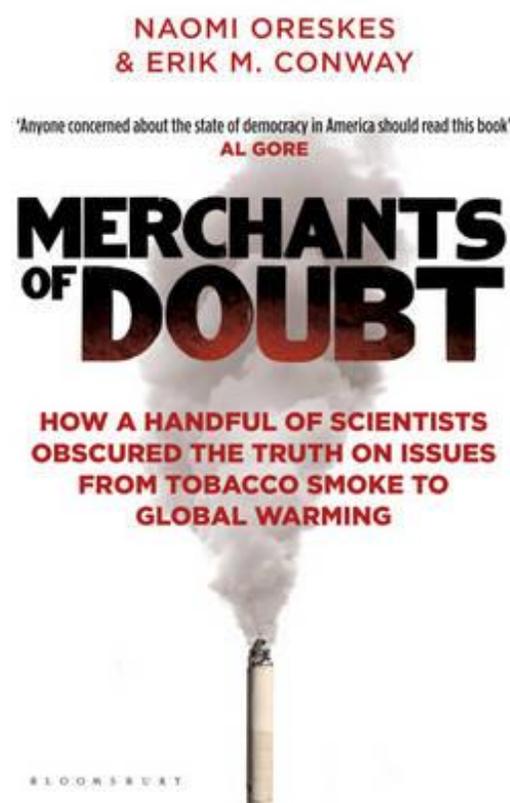
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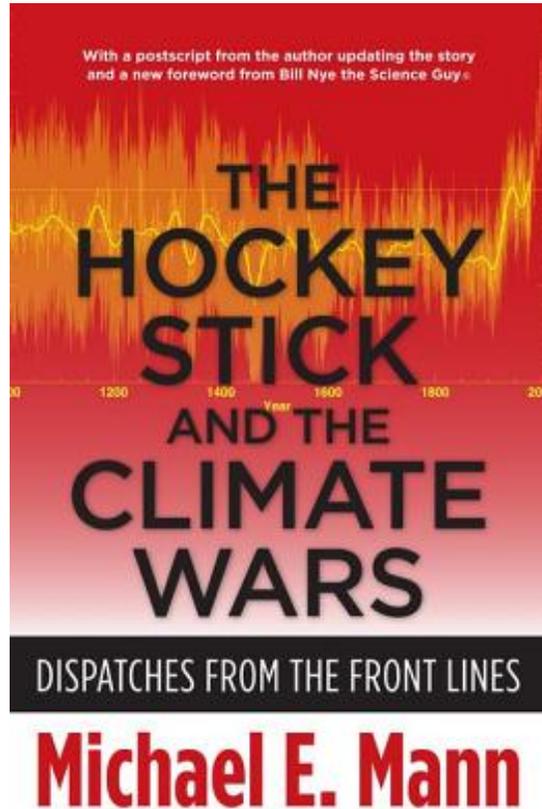
lot of different perspectives on how to resolve the climate crisis. This book shows that the system is broken, fixed by companies that are funding denialist groups and feeding the media with propaganda.”

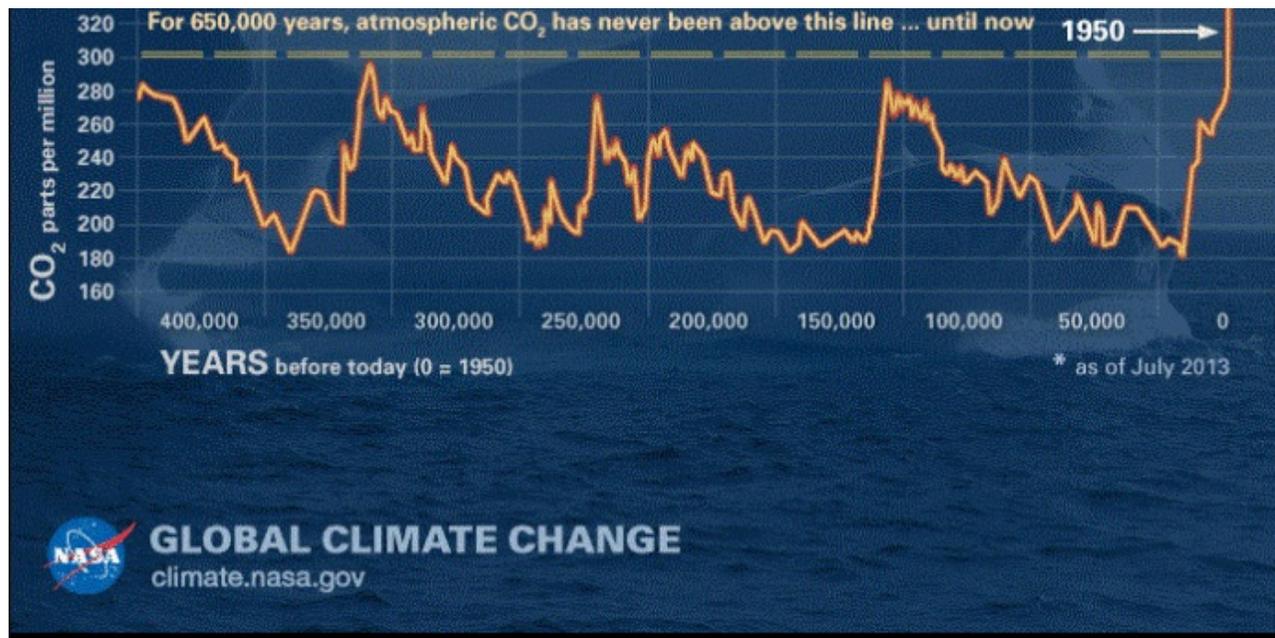
Dr. Christopher Keating does research on climate change. He is the author of *Undeniable! Dialogues on Global Warming*. He ran the \$30,000 Global Warming Skeptic Challenge. Keating also praises the book. He says *Merchants of Doubt* “is an even more disturbing account of the way the fossil fuel industry is at work to subvert science findings, including work on tobacco smoking, asbestos, ozone-depleting chemicals and climate change.”

The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars

by Michael E. Mann

Keating also recommends *The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars*, by Michael Mann. Keating says, “Michael Mann’s book is a well-written book that takes [readers] through the evolution of the debate on global warming and climate change by someone that was a witness to everything that went on.” Indeed, Michael Mann has been in the thick of things, as he is a member of Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change and helped gather the data for the Hockey Stick chart, which became a central figure of the climate change debate. *The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars* has plenty of supporters too, with praise for the book coming from Bill Nye, Paul R. Ehrlich, Bill McKibben, and Chris Mooney.



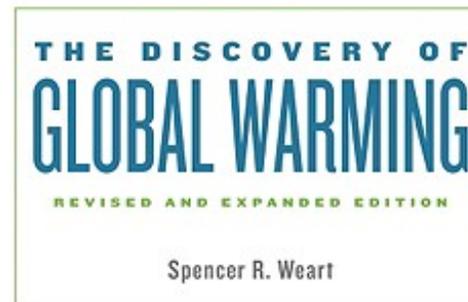


The oft-cited hockey stick

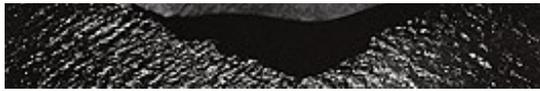
The Discovery of Global Warming

by Dr. Spencer R Weart

Our final recommendation comes from [climate researcher and blogger Kaitlin Alexander](#). Alexander [has endorsed several climate change books](#), but we're going to focus on the one she hails as elegant, engaging, and "full of great details you can sink your teeth into." Alexander chose *The Discovery of Global Warming* as the best introductory book on the topic because it doesn't read like a text book. She felt the book was as satisfying as a novel you might read for fun—she even compares the author to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. She also likes the way the book details the full history, not just coming in at the end when scientists began to feel more certain. She says, "it



traces back through history and follows this discovery all the way through, from Fourier to the AR4. We see the top of the credibility spectrum in action, and



examine exactly where the conclusions of the scientific community came from.”

There are plenty of other climate change books out there. If you have one you'd like to recommend, let us know in the comments. As you contemplate your comment, watch three **miles** of glacier break off and fall into the sea, from the Sundance award-winning film, *Chasing Ice*.



Karma Bennett

Loves nachos, Oakland, and books.

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Todd MacLean • 2 years ago

Great recommendations, Karma! And for a general assessment and outlook on our environmental future on Earth, with opinions and guidance from 365 different leading thinkers in the world today, check out Global Chorus: 365 Voices on the Future of the Planet - http://www.rmbooks.com/book_de... Happy Earth Day!

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