



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

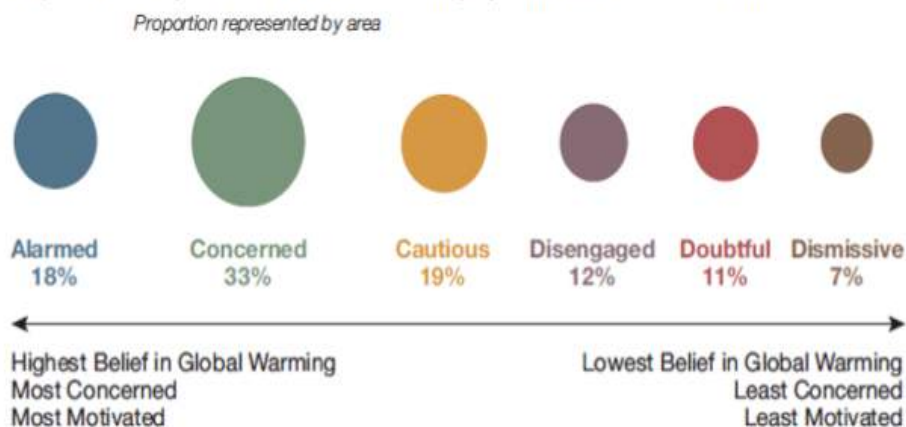
Climate Science Center™

March Newsletter 2016

The Public and Its Climate

Brian Shreck and Arnold Vedlitz collaborated on a recent publication titled, "The Public and Its Climate: Exploring the Relationship Between Public Discourse and Opinion on Global Warming." In their study, Shreck and Vedlitz use data from a national public opinion survey, allowing them to analyze relationships between peoples "engagement in public discourse on climate change and their beliefs about the existence of anthropogenic climate change and support for climate change-oriented policies." Shreck and Vedlitz want to know if the American public is qualified enough to help make decisions on "highly complex matters of policy," such as anthropogenic climate change. Shreck and Vedlitz assume that citizens and their leaders engage with each other in the form of public deliberation to make logical decisions about policies that are at hand. They tested three hypotheses on public discourse and its correlation to climate change. The data in the study suggests that political party affiliation can be predicted depending on the side of the issues a person is on and their involvement with public discourse. Their results indicated that political party affiliation is in fact "strongly and statistically significantly associated with belief in anthropogenic climate change." The results also suggest that people who identify as Democrats are more likely to agree or strongly agree with anthropogenic climate change. Furthermore, their results also showed that, people who feel the strongest about this topic (regardless of which political side they're on) discuss the topic more than people who don't feel as strongly about the issue of climate change.

Figure 1: Proportion of the U.S. adult population in the Six Americas



n=2,129

Dr. Brian Shreck



Dr. Brian Shreck is a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Political Science and the National Wind Institute. Dr. Shreck received his B.A. degree in political science at the University of Nebraska. He received his Ph.D. in political science at Texas A&M University specializing in public administration/policy and political theory. His research focuses on the roles of scientific uncertainty and technical complexity of the policymaking process. His dissertation specifically addressed how scientific uncertainty and complexity, including that related to climate change, affects the decision making process of interest groups and government agencies as they negotiate over habitat conservation plans for endangered species. His research also looks at how the public understands and interacts with scientific information, how they discuss

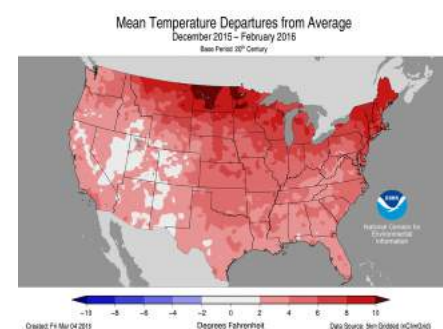
environmental problems, such as energy, water, and climate change, and how that influences formation and change of policy preferences at the mass level.

Upcoming Events

- The Climate Science Center will be co-hosting a community event with Lubbock United Neighborhood Association on March 29th from 6:30-8:00PM at Lubbock High School. The CSC presentation is titled, "Act Locally: 8 Easy Ways to Invest in a Healthy Community." After the presentation there will be workshops by 8 community organizations, where people can learn strategies towards building a healthier community. Refreshments and childcare will be provided.
- Our next interactive panel seminar will be on April 5th at noon in the Experimental Sciences Building, room 120. Four expert panelists will speak on energy in relevance to climate science.
- The South Central Climate Science Center early career professional development training will be held at Texas Tech University from June 19th to June 24th. Environmental professionals, post-docs, and Ph.D. students from any discipline conducting climate-related research associated with the south-central U.S. are invited to participate. [Click here](#) to fill out an application. The application deadline is April 8th.

Warmest Winter on Record

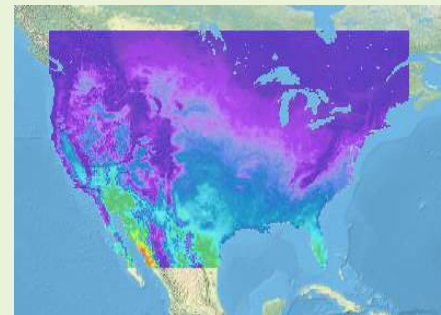
Many people are asking the question "where was winter this year"? According to NOAA, December through February temperatures in the lower 48 states readings were 4.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2.5 degrees Celsius) over the 20th century average. The warmest states were Maine, New Jersey, and Alaska. Actually, 34 of the lower 48 states have topped the 10 warmest winters on record. 2015-2016 was also one of the wettest winters on record. Many scientists say that these unusual winter temperatures are coming from a long-term trend of the gradual warming of the planet.



[Read Full Article Here](#)

- Our next video from our *Videos for Science* series has been released. [Click here](#) to watch our second video featuring Aaron Hill. Aaron is a graduate research assistant working under Dr. Christopher Weiss and is a part of the VORTEX South East severe weather team.
- If you have missed any of our seminars or Science by the Glass events, they are all available on our [CSC YouTube](#) channel. Also, if you are looking for more information/news on climate change follow our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) page.
- The South Central Climate Science Center has picked 10 interns to be a part of their undergraduate summer internship program for underrepresented minorities. The interns will be coming to Texas Tech University from June 5th to June 11th to learn about climate variability, meet researches, visit field sites, and participate in hands on activities.

The high-resolution climate projections generated by the TTU CSC are now online as part of the USGS GeoData Portal. They can be used to make interactive climate maps with a host of variables (shown: days per year with maximum temperatures above 90F). <http://goo.gl/OF49Ep>



March Seminar Panelists

Four expert panelists discussed their research on water with regards to climate science. Chuck West discussed farming techniques that focus on sustainability. Chuck explained that climate has a direct effect on agriculture and advocates that farmers will need to transition from irrigation to dry farming techniques. Alex Pearl discussed water from a policy point of view and explained the property laws in Texas. He advocates that these private property laws will need to change in order to implement water conservation practices. Kerry Griffis-Kyle discussed the importance of wetlands and how climate is influencing them. Kerry's goal is to provide information and tools to land managers in order to better manage the wetlands for wildlife. Ken Rainwater discussed water from an environmental engineer perspective. Ken advocates that people need to reconsider how much water they use on a daily basis and the community needs to start thinking of solutions in order to conserve water.



(Featured: Chuck West, Alex Pearl, Kerry Griffis-Kyle, Ken Rainwater)