

Acid Rain / Amazon Rain Forrest

Acid Rain was one of the many scare tactics used by radical environmentalists during the 1970's and 80's based on faulty and/or skewed reports. During the 1980's the federal government initiated the huge National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP), employing seven hundred scientists at a cost of over \$500 million. The NAPAP study found – to the surprise of most its scientists – that acid rain was far less threatening than it had been assumed to be at the onset of the study. Acid rain is a threat to only a few lakes, about 2% of the lake surfaces of the Adirondacks.¹ And this minor problem could be made less acidic with cheap and quick liming. Another interesting factoid is that in 1860, when forests around those lakes began to be cut and wood burned (which, by the by, lowers the acidity), the lakes were as acidic as now.²

Myth: Acid Rain is unnatural.

Fact: Rainwater is naturally acidic. Because water is such a good solvent, even in the cleanest air, rainwater dissolves some of the naturally present carbon dioxide, forming carbonic acid. According to EPA regulations, Ph levels any lower than 5.0 are environmentally harmful. Yet, an analysis of ice from the Antarctic and the Himalayas, deposited hundreds and thousands of years ago when the environment was presumably pristine, had Ph values ranging from 4.8 to 4.2.

Myth: Acid rain has caused a large portion of U.S. lakes to become acidic.

Fact: In a recent study of 7,000 Northeastern lakes, only 3.4% were found to be acidic. Most of these lakes are just as acidic as they were before the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, most of the acidic lakes in the United States are in Florida, where there is the least acid rain.³

The Clean Air Act of 1990 was passed (with large economic consequences mind you) all the while ignoring NAPAP's findings. The director of NAPAP expressed disappointment and dismay,⁴ that is until *60 Minutes* ran an expose on the acid rain scandal. In Europe, the supposed effects of acid rain in destroying forests and reducing tree growth have now been shown to be without foundation; forests, in fact, are larger, and trees growing more rapidly than in the first half of this century.

Myth: Acid rain destroys vegetation.

Fact: Acid rain actually has a positive impact on vegetation. The nitrogen and sulfur characteristic of acid rain, act as nutrients essential for plant growth. The world's first acid rain study concluded that, "*the principle effect of acid rain is the improvement of crop yields and crop protein content.*"⁵

¹ Brookes, Warren T. "Acid Rain: The \$140 Billion Fraud?" Consumer Comments 14 (November, 1990), p.2. (Publication of Consumer Alert.)

² Simon, Julian L. *The Ultimate Resource 2*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, New Jersey: 1996), pp. 265-66.

³ <http://www.nationalcenter.org/tp25.htm>

⁴ Footnote #1, p.2.

⁵ Footnote #3.

This all leads to the many current scares about Global Warming and the ozone hole. Again, these “popular” press items are based on some shoddy reports and have been skewed by extremists that for the most part are doing this because of political and philosophical views that are at variance with business and capitalism.

I have heard of the 1,700 scientists signing a paper expressing their concern for the **fact** of global warming. One never hears of the 15,000 prominent scientists signing that this is a bunch of hogwash. For instance, everyone has heard of the “rain forests being depleted”. How we lost a football field every hour or other statistics were a 100 acres a minute. And a lot of people believed this without thinking twice and spread the rumor, all for the sake of “saving mother earth.” Sounds good! That’s why people flock to these “causes.”

However, the past-director and co-founder of Greenpeace as well as one of the world’s top Eco-scientist, Patrick Moore, says this about the rainforests:

“All these save-the-forests arguments are based on bad science.... They are quite simply wrong... we found that the Amazon rainforests is more than 90% intact. We flew over it and met all the environmental authorities. We studied satellite pictures of the entire area.”⁶

Phillip Stott, who is professor of biogeography at London University, with 30 years of studying tropical forests under his belt, as well as editing the international Journal of Biogeography agreed:

“There are now still – despite what humans have done – more rainforests today than there were 12,000 years ago.... If the rainforest in Amazonia was being destroyed at the rate critics say, it would have all vanished ages ago.”⁷

Why then would these skewed reports about environmental woes so permeate the general public? Patrick Moore was asked the same question on an ABC special that aired in June called “Tampering with Nature,” his response was that the environmental movement has been hijacked by political activists: “They’re using environmental rhetoric to cloak agendas like class warfare and anti-corporatism that, in fact, have almost nothing to do with ecology.”⁸ All these new and old environmental doomsayers are nothing more than a blip on the interest-group screen, peddling nothing more than hype and politics.⁹

Books of Interest

S. Fred Singer, *Hot Talk – Cold Talk: Global Warnings Unfinished Debate.*

Patrick Michaels & Robert Balling, *The Satanic Gases: Cleaning the Air about Global Warming.*

Dixie Lee Ray & Lou Guzzo, *Trashing the Planet: How Science Can Help Us Deal With Acid Rain, Depletion of the Ozone, and Nuclear Waste (Among Other Things)*

Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World*

Julian Simon, *Hoodwinking the Nation*

Peter Huber, *Hard Green: Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists*

⁶ http://www.ranamuck.org/amazon_nyp.htm

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ <http://www.greenpiece.org/abcnews.html>

⁹ I recommend the video *Amazon Rainforest: Clearcutting the Myths*