

# American Thinker

[Return to the Article](#)

January 11, 2009

## CO<sub>2</sub> Fairytales in Global Warming

By [Gregory Young](#)

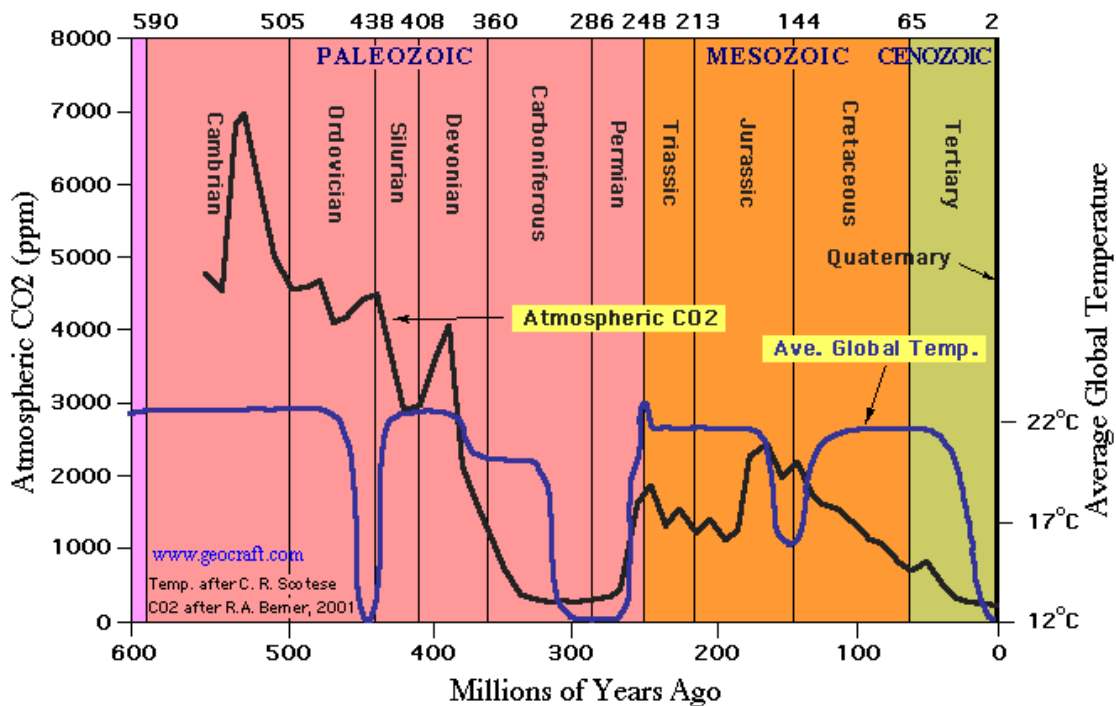
If one were to script a Global Warming scam one would have to be a knot-head or brain-dead to pick Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) as the lead factor.

Of course we know now that CO<sub>2</sub> was rolled out as the "poster child" nemesis against the environment. It was meant to get us hysterical enough to plead with our politicians to exact a tax on our carbon footprints so that we can save the planet earth. But it's turning out that the CO<sub>2</sub> "poster child" has significant problems. Despite the fact that Carbon is a part of the CO<sub>2</sub> molecule, the atmospheric science of CO<sub>2</sub> directly contradicts what the AGW alarmists are trying to sell us. Promoting CO<sub>2</sub> as the environmental monkey on our back is absolutely ludicrous. CO<sub>2</sub> is friend to all life, not a foe.

I have already covered some of the arguments against CO<sub>2</sub> as the lead agent causing Global Warming [before](#) in American Thinker pointing out (as many more are today) that Global Warming is a hoax of the worst order. So I won't repeat those details here. Suffice to say that current CO<sub>2</sub> levels hover around 385 parts per million (ppm), a relatively minor constituent of earth's entire atmosphere -- [less than 4/100ths of 1% of all gases present](#).

Nevertheless, Anthropogenic (man-made) Global Warming (AGW) proponents demand that unless we immediately reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the earth's atmosphere to less than 350 ppm, we (that is mankind) will cause huge and irreversible damage to the earth.

Historically, and at one significant point indeed, CO<sub>2</sub> atmospheric concentrations were much, much higher, 6,000 plus ppm. And guess what? The earth was more than just fine. It was incredibly filled with life. This fact seems to fall on deaf ears when talking to Global Warming protagonists. So, to make things picture clear, consider the graph [below](#). It is a representation of the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the earth's atmosphere from the Cambrian Age to the present.



The chart is fairly easy to understand. Note the *Black Line* on the chart representing "Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>." See how it has been declining for the past 500 million years? Also note that in the Cambrian Age, some 570 million years ago, all of life -- "all" meaning all 34 current *animal phyla* -- appeared to suddenly *explode* upon the earth's surface (left-hand side of the chart). Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at that time were estimated to be close to 7,000 ppm. That's a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 7000 ppm then, 385 ppm now.

At the time on earth when life seems to have blossomed beyond anything that we've seen, CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were the highest that have ever been recorded. In other words, high concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> didn't seem to have the least ill effect *on the greatest expansion of life in the history of the earth.*

In fact, it could be argued that the abundance of life arose precisely because high atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were soaring; certainly not because of its absence. To be sure, high atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and warm temperatures acted to usher in all life on earth. Compared to former geologic times, earth's current atmosphere is unequivocally and fundamentally CO<sub>2</sub>-impoverished.

So if, as we are led to believe by the AGW crowd, CO<sub>2</sub> is a pollutant that will harm all life when its concentrations exceed 350 ppm, how "on earth" did life suddenly explode upon the planet when atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were almost 7,000 ppm?

How can CO<sub>2</sub> be such an environmental "downer," when the majority of life on the earth has in the past benefited by such abundance? And not just by a little, but by a lot?

Remember too that there were no people around at that time. No industry. No SUVs. No coal-fired furnaces. No shopping malls and miles of blacktop. There was a lot of life, for sure, all eating, reproducing -- and being shamefully flatulent no doubt. Yet sky-high CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations didn't appear to do anything to disrupt the effusion of life covering the entire planet, filling the waterways and oceans.

Incidentally, we also know that man-made CO<sub>2</sub> pollution being responsible for global warming is not supported by historical fact. The period known as the Holocene Maximum (approximately 7500 to 4000 years ago) is a good example -- so-named because it was the hottest period in human history, long before humans invented industrial pollution. Furthermore, earth's temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> levels today have reached levels similar to a previous interglacial cycle known as the Eemian Interglacial Period of 120,000 - 140,000 years ago, a cycle lasting some 20,000 years before the earth returned to a full-

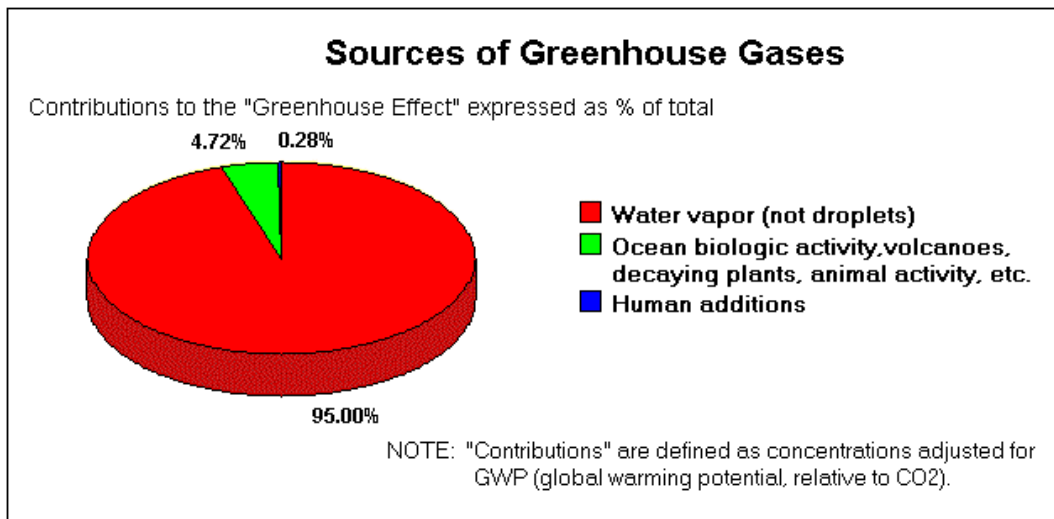
fledged ice age immediately afterward.[i]

But still the AGW crowd clings to their mantra. I can only surmise that AGW advocates are experiencing cognitive dissonance and splitting, consciously choosing to be unaware of earth's geophysical and climatic history. For instance, revised Russian Ice Core Data from the Antarctica show that CO<sub>2</sub> has been increasing steadily for the last 18,000 years. Yet again, AGW proponents claim that CO<sub>2</sub> levels now are unnaturally high and are only the result of the last 200 years or so of human pollution.

Getting back to the chart above, please note the *Blue Line* denoting Global Temperature when compared to the *Black Line* (CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations) appears to have little correlation. Indeed, simple observation reveals how much warmer it has been in the past (~20-22° C), and for longer periods of time, compared to today (~14° C.) whereas CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have been steadily declining. CO<sub>2</sub> does not cause Global Warming. These findings are exactly opposite to what AGW alarmists hysterically declare.

To further demonstrate how insignificant CO<sub>2</sub> gas is as a factor of AGW, consider the following chart. Once again a picture is worth a thousand words. As shown [below](#), human or man-made additions to the whole global mix of greenhouse gas is only 0.28% (*shown in blue*). Of that amount, man-made CO<sub>2</sub> represents only 0.117%, or a little less than half of the 0.28%. Man-made sources of other gases contribute the rest, or 0.163% of the 0.28% to the total of human additions to global greenhouse gases. Now, contrast CO<sub>2</sub> with the 4.72% gases derived from oceanic biological activities, decaying plants, animal activity, etc (*shown in green*), and water vapor (*shown in red*), a whopping 95%!

This means that *99.72% of the greenhouse effect is due totally to natural causes*. Even if we wanted and there was some scientific reason to do so, any attempt to remove all human activity from the equation (least wise CO<sub>2</sub> with its 0.117%), would have little impact on climate change or AGW.



Ironically, water vapor as a global greenhouse gas isn't even discussed in the UN's International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Instead the reports concentrate on the alleged evils and trepidations of CO<sub>2</sub>.

To nail the coffin shut on this one, let's look at some other friendly facts about CO<sub>2</sub> that we shouldn't forget:

- 1. Each year 186 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> enter the earth's atmosphere. Of that, only 6 billion tons are from human activity (3.2%). Some 90 billion tons come from biologic activity in earth's oceans and the rest from such sources as volcanoes and decaying land plants.
- 2. CO<sub>2</sub> is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas. The CO<sub>2</sub> that goes into the atmosphere does not stay there for long. It is continually recycled by terrestrial plant life and earth's oceans -- the great retirement home for most terrestrial carbon dioxide. The buffering capacity of the oceans is enormous. The oceans currently contain about 50 times as

much CO<sub>2</sub> as the atmosphere.

- 3. Plants absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and emit oxygen as a waste product. Humans and animals both breathe oxygen and emit CO<sub>2</sub> as a waste product that helps keep our bodies' pH normal. It works out nice for all those involved.
- 4. CO<sub>2</sub> is a nutrient to plants, not a pollutant. Plant-growers introduce more CO<sub>2</sub> into their planting sheds when they want to stimulate growth. And all life -- plants and animals alike -- benefit from more of it. All life on earth is carbon-based and CO<sub>2</sub> is an essential ingredient.
- 5. CO<sub>2</sub> has great personal importance to us biologically and medically. Red blood cells convert CO<sub>2</sub> to H<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (Carbonic Acid) and Bicarbonate ions. Carbonic acid is used to help off-load body acids, keeping our pH healthy. When you expire CO<sub>2</sub> from your lungs, CO<sub>2</sub> is removed from your blood. As the blood loses CO<sub>2</sub>, blood levels of Carbonic Acid drop, causing the blood to become less acidic (raising blood pH). Without this profitable exchange, we would die.
- 6. Prolonged *hyperventilation* (rapid, deep breathing) releases so much CO<sub>2</sub> through the lungs that our blood level of Carbonic Acid are drastically lowered, leading to alkalosis. *Hypoventilation* (slow, shallow breathing) produces a build-up of CO<sub>2</sub> in the blood. The resulting rise in Carbonic Acid levels can become high enough to produce acidosis. But mild hypoventilation can be useful when a person panics, encouraging them to hypoventilate by breathing into and out of a paper bag, or by sitting down and simply breathing slowly. As the person's CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise, the resulting acidosis inhibits neurons enough to relax the body and calm the mind, restoring normal breathing.
- 7. As an added caveat, when CO<sub>2</sub> is frozen and placed in water or a punch bowl for kids' parties, it evaporates so rapidly it appears to boil, producing a milky-white gas that's really cool...

You would have thought that the AGW crowd would have picked a more menacing, threatening, less friendly and helpful *character-molecule* than CO<sub>2</sub> to scare us into effectively being taken in by their carbon footprint tax scam. But the AGW *poster child* of CO<sub>2</sub> has failed miserably in this regard. CO<sub>2</sub> is not the nemesis that the warming alarmists would have us believe.

***Dr. Gregory Young is a neuroscientist and physicist, a doctoral graduate of the University of Oxford, Oxford, England. He currently chairs a privately funded think-tank engaged in experimental biophysical research.***

---

[i] R.S. Bradley and J.A. Eddy based on J.T. Houghton et al., *Climate Change: The IPCC Assessment*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990 and published in *EarthQuest*, vo. 1, 1991. Courtesy of Thomas Crowley, [Remembrance of Things Past: Greenhouse Lessons from the Geologic Record](#).

**Page Printed from:** [http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/01/co2\\_fairytales\\_in\\_global\\_warmi.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/01/co2_fairytales_in_global_warmi.html) at July 11, 2009 - 12:45:00 AM EDT