



"TWENTY COUNTIES...ONE VOICE"

NC-20 Newsletter August 2011

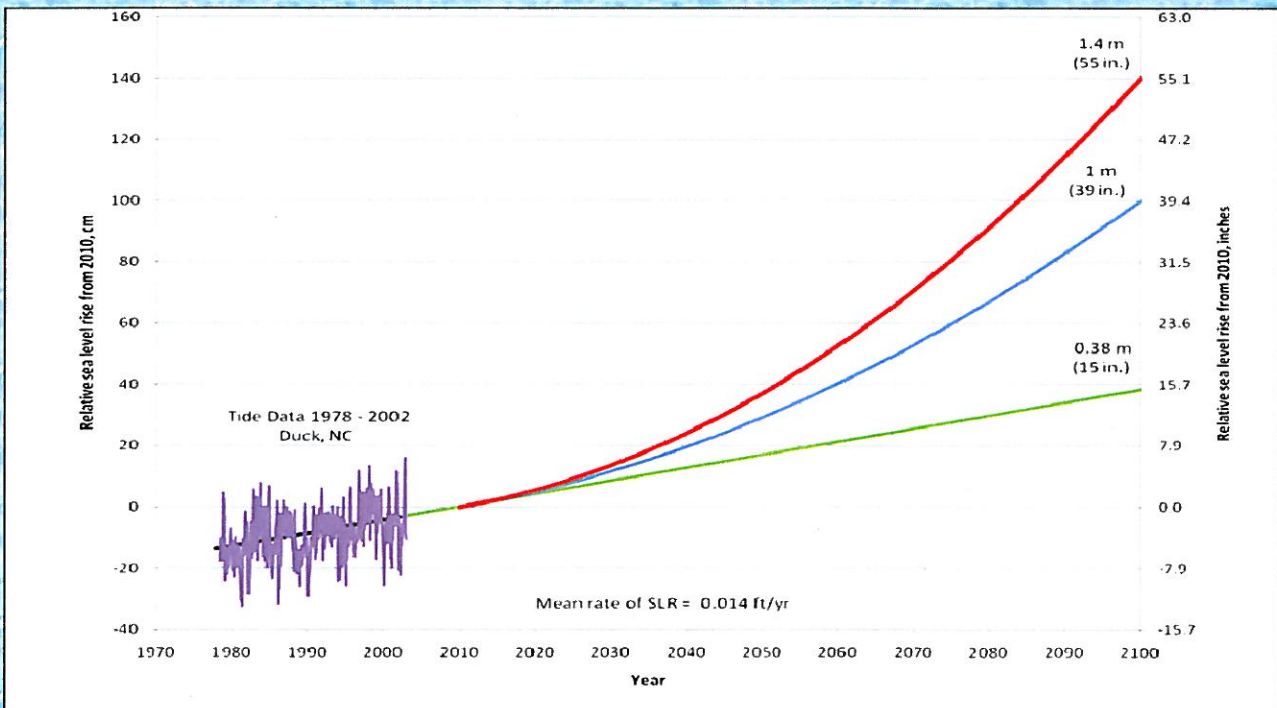
Sea Level Rise - The Beast That Won't Die

The Division of Emergency Management (DEM) of the State of North Carolina was recently awarded a \$5,000,000 grant to study sea level rise (SLR) by the Federal Government. The approach this division is taking is somewhat different from that of the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) in that DEM is more concerned with emergency prevention and response issues such as evacuation routes, etc. Also, as a "Cooperating Technical State", DEM has primary ownership and responsibility of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for all North Carolina communities as part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Coastal Resources Commission conversely administers CAMA and is more interested in land use planning as it relates to sea level rise.

At a recent meeting in Raleigh, NC-20 President Willo Kelly and Board Member and Dare County Manager Bobby Outen attended an invitation-only meeting and listened to the incessant drumbeat of "sea level rise is coming because of anthropogenic (manmade) global warming (AGW)." One speaker after another validated AGW without question and also accepted the Science Panel's report of a projected 39-inch sea level rise with no dissension.

What was puzzling is that in recent meetings with the CRC, the 39-inch sea level rise projected by the Science Panel of the CRC was largely discredited by NC 20. The Science Panel of the CRC was basing a 39-inch rise on a graph, reproduced below. The origin of the green, blue and red lines are as follows:

- Green: a linear (straight line) projection of sea level rise of 15 inches, based on Duck, North Carolina readings;
- Red: a 55-inch accelerating rise predicated on the discredited work of a scientist by the name of Rahmstorf; and
- Blue: a hypothetical 39-inch rise which, implied by the Science Panel, was a reasonable "compromise" between the other two readings.



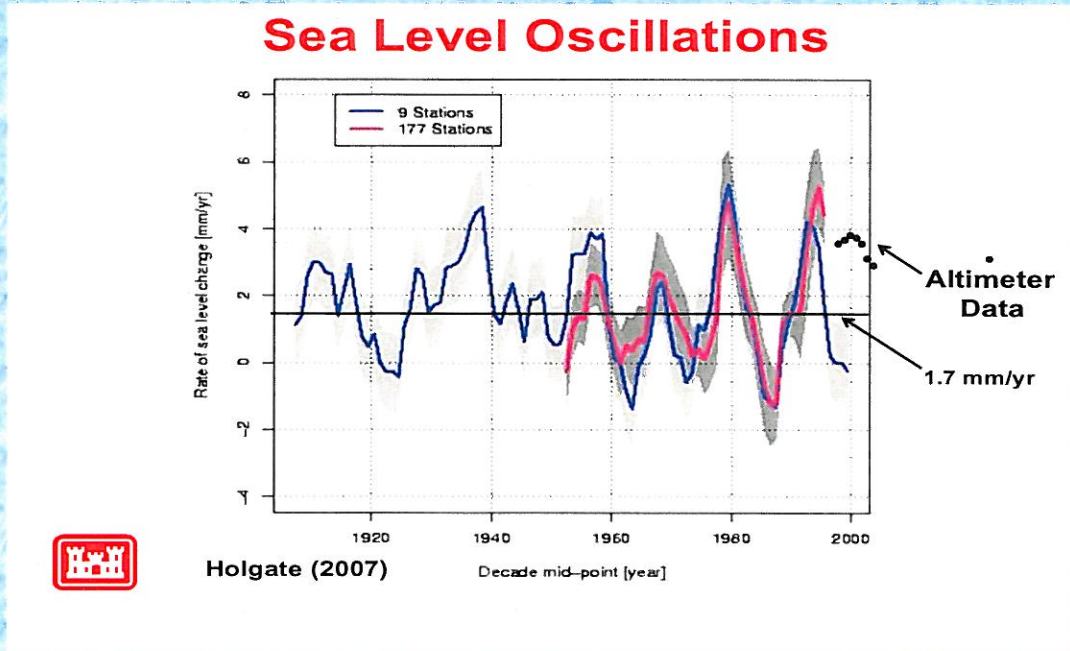
Briefly, the problems with the graph on the previous page are:

- 1) the Duck station is no longer in existence nor is it recognized by NOAA;
- 2) Duck had the worst readings of any station in North Carolina, meaning that the Science Panel picked an "outlier" not even remotely representative of the sea level readings elsewhere in North Carolina; and,
- 3) there is no data whatsoever suggesting that sea level rise is accelerating, meaning the other two lines (red and blue) are predictions based on modeling that have generally failed to recreate/calibrate themselves to the historical record. They are figments of someone's imagination.

Let's examine the Duck (Green Line) readings first. As previously stated, Duck had the worst readings of any of the monitoring stations in North Carolina because the northeastern section of the state is subject to "subsidence." Subsidence is a geological term, which means the land is sinking. The land in the northern half of the Coastal Plains is sinking because there are depressions in the bedrock resulting in a thick slab of "shifty" coastal sediments/rock that the southern half of the Coastal Plains does not possess. Therefore, the higher projection of 15 inches at Duck was in part due to a sea level rise AND an almost equal drop in the elevation of the land itself. To allow it as a key data set and suggest or imply that its elevated readings were an exclusive result of the ocean rising is, to be blunt, not the truth. Other readings in the southeastern part of the NC 20 area led to linear projections of half of Duck's.

The Rahmstorf 2007 study (Red Line in the first graph) was withdrawn by Rahmstorf himself after realizing that he used incorrect mathematical procedures to forecast sea level rise based on his assumptions. As you can see below, there is no evidence whatsoever that there is any acceleration of sea level rise. This means the red projections on the graph on the previous page that show acceleration are the assumption on the part of some writers that manmade global warming should be causing an increase or acceleration in global temperatures and, therefore, sea level rise.

The graph below is real scientific evidence: this is a graph taken from a published study by Houston and Dean that shows sea level oscillations are a commonly recurring event with about a 1.7 mm per year upward slope in about the last 100 years:



The full report is on our website at:

<http://www.nc-20.com/pdf/Core%20of%20Engineers%20Study.pdf>

Houston and Dean Conclusions

"Our analyses do not indicate acceleration in sea level in U.S. tide gauge records during the 20th century. Instead, for each time period we consider, the records show small decelerations that are consistent with a number of earlier studies of worldwide-gauge records. The decelerations that we obtain are opposite in sign and one to two orders of magnitude less than the +0.07 to +0.28 mm/y² accelerations that are required to reach sea levels predicted for 2100 by Vermeer and Rahmstorf (2009), Jevrejeva, Moore, and Grinsted (2010), and Grinsted, Moore, and Jevrejeva (2010). Bindoff et al. (2007) note an increase in worldwide temperature from 1906 to 2005 of 0.74°C. It is essential that investigations continue to address why this worldwide-temperature increase has not produced acceleration of global sea level over the past 100 years, and indeed why global sea level has possibly decelerated for at least the last 80 years."*

**(emphasis by NC 20)*

Even more recently, Dean and Houston's results were augmented by a paper authored by an Australian scientist who also observed no acceleration in Southern Hemisphere tide gauges. What is frustrating for the more devoted of the climate change advocates is that the climate has been warming at a faster rate, but the rate of sea level rise appears to be static. Accordingly, there is no scientific basis to estimate the future rate of rise of 39 inches by 2100.

Based on this evidence, NC 20 was able to get the Coastal Resources Commission to eliminate its mandatory inclusion of a 39-inch sea level rise in all county land use planning in the NC 20 (CAMA) counties, and we thought the issue was dead. Amazingly, the Science Panel report, with all the projections of acceleration, was still allowed to stand as the CRC's official position. At the meeting in Raleigh with DEM, that document was produced again with the graph you saw on the first page. I recently described the surprise we encountered when we discovered the Science Panel's report was allowed to continue in circulation. I conveyed to Bob Emory, the Chairman of the CRC, my feeling that we were playing a version of "whack a mole." After several hours of listening as speaker after speaker at the Raleigh DEM asserted the acceleration of sea level rise, NC 20 President Willo Kelly finally rose in frustration. She spoke passionately concerning the lack of science in all the discussions and the potential economic harm that could come from continuing the pursuit of a sea level rise scenario that was based on nothing but hot air, if you will excuse the pun.

The problem from our perspective is that any time someone receives \$5,000,000 to study sea level rise, they are certainly going to do everything in their power to find sea level rise. As I have indicated in previous communications, the consequences are enormous for NC 20 counties. Every road, dwelling, commercial building, power plant, landfill, "ad infinitum" would have to take into account a sea level 39 inches higher than it is today. Not only is that unscientific, it portends financial disaster as insurance companies, financial institutions and the State DOT begin to alter their plans based on this fantasy projection.

As we saw earlier, there is indeed a very modest linear trend shown by the reliable data, about 7 inches in 100 years, but not an accelerating trend claimed by sea level rise advocates. It appears their primary motivation is the belief in Manmade (Anthropogenic) Global Warming (AGW). If they are correct, if our CO₂ emissions are causing massive changes in the world climate, including melting of the polar icecaps, then we should be able to find some shred of data concerning accelerations of sea level rise somewhere. However, the small rise we do find is not accelerating and appears to be part of an historic cycle that began long before man inhabited the planet. Thus, CO₂ may be a good **proxy or indicator** for warming climate and rising sea level as ascertained by the geologic record, but it is not 100% the **cause** of sea level oscillation (up or down).

Indeed, CO₂ concentrations are much, much higher than they were the last six warming periods, spanning several hundred thousand years. Even the small linear trend that does exist shows evidence of diminishing. By the way, CO₂ is about .03% of the atmosphere.

What can we do about the continued drumbeat and the potential harm that could come to our counties if the alarmist view of sea level rise is allowed to assume some official designation? Insurance, the financing of land, construction and land use regulation could all be adversely impacted to a very harmful degree. The best thing we can do is to convey to each of our legislators our concern over the lack of objectivity that was and is continuing to be employed by the Science Panel's assertion of a 39-inch sea level rise in the absence of key information.

While the Science Panel may serve a useful purpose, most members are not qualified to prepare a climate/sea level rise report of this magnitude, not because they aren't well qualified in their respective disciplines, but rather because for the most part, they do not have the type of climate and oceanography background that is required. A list of Science Panel members and contributors is provided on pages 4 and 5 of their report - most of these individuals are well-respected biologists, engineers, and geologists. Very few, however, actually study climate and sea level rise as their primary field of research, and certainly not to a degree where they can make predictions into the future - their publication record and field of research is simply different, not bad, just different. A letter to the Governor outlining these issues and perhaps a request for a new report prepared solely by climate and sea level experts abroad and in North Carolina wouldn't be a bad idea.

To an outsider, the most significant innovation in the global warming controversy is the overt reliance that is being placed on models. Back in the days of nuclear winter, computer models were invoked to add weight to a conclusion: "These results are derived with the help of a computer model."

But now, large-scale computer models are seen as generating data in themselves. No longer are models judged by how well they reproduce data from the real world - increasingly, models provide the data.

As if they were themselves a reality. And indeed they are, when we are projecting forward. There can be no observational data about the year 2100. There are only model runs. This fascination with computer models is something I understand very well.

Richard Feynmann called it a disease. I fear he is right. Because only if you spend a lot of time looking at a computer screen can you arrive at the complex point where the global warming debate now stands. Nobody believes a weather prediction twelve hours ahead. Now we're asked to believe a prediction that goes out 100 years into the future?

And make financial investments based on that prediction? Has everybody lost their minds?

- Michael Crichton

NC-20 is a non-profit corporation that was created to represent the economic interests of the counties. It has been engaged in efforts to stem the rate of increase of homeowner and dwelling insurance rates to add realism to storm water and other environmental regulations and, most recently, to object to the lack of science in sea level rise discussions and regulations related to it.

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