



Defending the Teaching of Evolution & Climate Science

THE BLOG

NATIONAL CENTER for Science Education

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No Vacation From Climate Change

Posted on August 7, 2014 * Leave a comment
Climate change
California



I noticed the "vacancy" signs first. Two motels, three motels, five, ten, twenty. Their parking lots empty, the swimming pools undisturbed, the hopeful ice machines churning out cubes for guests who never came. This, at the height of the tourist season.

Was it the still-sluggish economy? Steep gas prices? Or something else, something extraordinary?

I motored north on Interstate 5, noticing that the water level in Lake Shasta was the lowest I'd seen in 20 years. Normally a huge draw this time of year, packed with houseboats and jet skis and screaming kids, the lake was oddly calm, the few lonely boats almost scraping bottom. (The California Department of Water Resources [confirms](#) that the lake is at 34% of total capacity.)

The story was much the same in the City of Mount Shasta. A handful of tourists, "vacancy" signs at every motel, raging fires to the northeast, a brutal drought made more painful by the triple digit heat.

As I talked to local shopkeepers and residents—a normally stoic lot—it was clear that climate change was a big worry. And the evidence was everywhere. The slopes of Mount Shasta were nearly naked, the south side of the mountain almost totally devoid of snow and ice. (The annual dog sled race was [cancelled](#) earlier this year for lack of snow.) The water level in Lake Siskiyou is [sinking](#) so quickly that you won't be able to launch a trailer-mounted boat after mid-August. Local RV parks offer hookups-- but [no water](#).



Mt. Shasta, sans snow

Even the normally conservative *Mount Shasta Herald*—remember, this is logging country—echoed these concerns in its pages.

For most of us, climate change is an abstraction. Our jobs, our lives, our vacations, are seldom affected. But to the residents and merchants of the Mt. Shasta region, climate change is real right now.

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Here is more on projections in changes in snowpack for the Southwest:
<http://nca2014.globalchange.go...>

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