

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin ***[September 13, 2021]***



Our weekly bulletin collects and digests news of the past week.
Contributions welcome.

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NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

AIP: [Biden rounding out appointments to top science positions](#)

The slate of leaders Biden has picked reflect his administration's focus on diversity, with women and people of color occupying many key positions. However, he also declined to make pathbreaking selections for the positions of presidential science adviser and NASA administrator, which are two high-profile jobs that have always gone to men.

AIP: [Science Committee parcels out \\$45 billion for Democrats' spending drive](#)

Last week, the House Science Committee advanced its legislative proposal for dividing up the \$45.5 billion it was allocated from the \$3.5 trillion spending package that Democrats are currently developing. If enacted, it would provide several science agencies with a flood of funding that in most cases would be spent over five years to restore and upgrade facilities and expand certain research programs.

E&E News: [Record number of environmental activists murdered](#)

A record number of activists working to protect the environment and land rights were murdered last year, according to a report by a campaign group. Almost a third of the murders were reportedly linked to resource exploitation - logging, mining, large-scale agribusiness, hydroelectric dams, and other infrastructure.

FDA News: [FDA Revises Q&A Guidance on Pandemic-Era Generic Drug Development](#)

The FDA has revised its guidance on generic drug development and application submission during the COVID-19 public health emergency, providing additional information and clarification of existing policies but no policy changes.

Phys.org: [Frustrated scientists convince astronomy journal to implement trans-inclusive name change policy](#)

A group of united astronomers have successfully convinced Europe's leading astronomy journal Astronomy & Astrophysics to institute a name change policy for transgender people and others. Authors may now change their names in previously published papers across the Science spectrum.

Morning Ag Clips: [FAO launches tools to encourage carbon sequestration](#)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) today launched two practical instruments designed to encourage soil organic carbon maintenance and sequestration, a key tool for climate action. Carbon sequestration involves the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the form of soil organic carbon (SOC), with the capture of CO₂ in the soil seen as an effective way of reducing greenhouse gases.

REGIONAL NEWS

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Indiana groups want more access, transparency during Duke Energy planning process](#)

Seven Indiana environmental groups requested that Duke Energy increase transparency to consumers regarding their 2021 Integrated Resource Plan in a letter to the company this week. The groups expressed frustration over the format of virtual meetings. Participants in the meetings are unable to unmute, turn on their cameras, or use the public chat feature. Stan Pinegar, Duke Energy Indiana president, responded to the complaints by stating that the virtual format has allowed more public participation than in previous years.

IndyStar: [How much of the U.S. carbon emissions come from Indiana? \(Hint: It's a lot\)](#)

According to the US energy information Administration, Indiana emitted nearly 190 million metric tons of energy-related carbon dioxide in 2018. The state ranked in the top 10 for both overall carbon dioxide emissions and CO₂ emissions per capita. Why? Indiana's energy relies heavily on fossil fuels; wind and solar accounted for less than 10% of Indiana's electricity generation last year.

WFYI, Indianapolis: [Indiana aims to increase COVID-19 testing capacity, hires new company](#)

On Friday, Indiana reported its highest number of cases in a day since January 2021. In an effort to expand testing, the state has contracted with Gravity Diagnostics. The contract provides staffing and supplies necessary to rollout an additional 5,000 tests per day. Increases include both PCR and rapid antigen tests.

AP News: [Indiana reports first West Nile virus case of 2021](#)

On Friday, the state reported the first local case of West Nile virus this year. The virus, which is transmitted by infected mosquitoes, can cause neuroinvasive diseases in severe cases. Mosquitoes carrying the virus have been identified in at least 17 counties across the state. State health officials recommend taking precautions at times and places when mosquitoes are particularly active.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

New York Times: [Science alone can't heal a sick society](#)

Despite more than 200 million detected cases worldwide, scientists still don't understand much about transmission, nor what makes an infected person sick enough to be hospitalized, beyond simple demographics like age and sex.

Nature: [Climate science is supporting lawsuits that could help save the world](#)

Over the past few decades, environmental groups and citizens around the world have filed more than 1,800 climate suits. Science has been central to supporting the arguments in these cases, but the vast majority have relied on the most basic conclusions of climate research. Now, a new vanguard of scientists is seeking to bring in the latest science to improve lawsuits' chances of driving substantial reductions in greenhouse-gas pollution.

SciTechDaily: [What is causing all these new coronavirus variants? Is it the COVID-19 vaccines?](#)

With just under 40% of people in the world having received a dose of a vaccine – only 2% in low-income countries – and nearly a million new infections occurring globally every day, the emergence of new, more contagious variants, like delta, is being driven by uncontrolled transmission, not vaccines.

Religion and Politics: [Why creationism appears in debates about scientific racism](#)

At a time when the politicization of science-based public policy has led to overly broad platitudes about “belief in science” and increased awareness of historical and current has raised fresh questions about systemic racism, religious rhetoric is now being used to reframe discussions about “pseudoscience” or “science denial,” as well as about anti-racism in science.

EOS: [Recognizing geology's colonial history for better policy today](#)

In the 19th century, the belief in manifest destiny drove white settlers to expand rapidly into the West, leading to the widespread removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands, genocide, and harm to their knowledge systems and lifeways. Geological mapping played a significant role in identifying which lands were profitable for U.S. settlement through gold and other natural resource extraction.

Science Friday: [Talking through the tangled terms of climate change](#)

Many words and phrases that scientists use to talk about climate change are not understood by the general public, according to a recent study from the University of Southern California and the United Nations Foundation. This begs the question: if the public scientists are trying to reach don't understand what is being discussed, what's the point?

TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS

Federation of American Scientists: [Join the Congressional Science Policy Initiative](#)

Congressional Science Policy Initiative is a nonpartisan effort to facilitate the engagement of scientists, engineers, technologists, and other experts with the US Legislative Branch to help produce evidence-based public policy. The CSPI provides technical assistance for Congressional offices developing legislation and organizes councils for unique science policy areas.

The CSIU Weekly News Bulletin is now available on the web. To view this page online go to <https://csiub.org/weekly-news-bulletins>. To view archives of past bulletins, see <https://csiub.org/bulletin-archives>.

Our CSIU news bulletin is intended to provide a brief update on recent news, editorials, as well as action items related to science integrity and science policy. Note that editorial pieces and action items are assembled from a variety of sources and organizations; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy priorities of Concerned Scientists @ IU. This week's news bulletin was compiled by CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of English and by ASIU member and biology sophomore Rose Schnabel, an aspiring science writer. If you'd like to volunteer—or if you have additional links you'd like to share for future bulletins, send them to Christoph at cirmsche@indiana.edu.

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