



Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [June 29, 2020]

NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

Politico: [Azar warns “window is closing” on combating Covid spread](#)

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar warned the country Sunday that coronavirus outbreaks in Texas, Florida, Arizona, and other southern and southwestern states threaten to spiral out of control without immediate intervention including widespread use of masks or face coverings.

The New York Times: [Actual coronavirus infections vastly undercounted, C.D.C. data shows](#)

The CDC released data showing that coronavirus infections are over 10x higher than reported rates in many US states.

Thomson Reuters: [Foreign ministers flag climate change as major spark for conflicts](#)

The effects of climate change - and now the coronavirus pandemic, which threatens global trade in food - are adding to pressures in already fragile parts of the world, and even in many now considered stable, ministers and security experts said.

Grist: [Summer just started, and the Arctic already topped 100 degrees](#)

As global warming accelerates, the Arctic is heating up two to three times faster than the rest of the planet. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the earth as a whole has warmed about 1.44 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 40 years; the Arctic has warmed by about 3.5 degrees over the same stretch.

Smithsonian: [Temperatures hit a sweltering 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in arctic town](#)

A Russian town north of the Arctic Circle experienced a high of 100.4 °F on June 20th. If verified, this would be the highest temperature in the Arctic ever recorded. Climate change's disproportionate effect on the Arctic is resulting in increasingly warm temperatures, melting permafrost, and wildfires.

The New York Times: [Pandemic's cleaner air could reshape what we know about the atmosphere](#)

NOAA, as well as many other national and international organizations, are using the dramatic drop in air pollution during coronavirus lockdowns to gather data and improve climate models. The data can aid research in atmospheric chemistry and public health and affect policymaking in years to come.

Huff Post: [Trump to nominate anti-environment extremist as permanent public lands Chief](#)

Trump will formally nominate William Perry Pendley, a self-proclaimed “sagebrush rebel” with extreme anti-environmental views and a long history of advocating for the sale of federal lands in the West, to serve as director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Chemical and Engineering News: [EPA won't appeal court ruling against its policy on science advisers](#)
The US Environmental Protection Agency says it won't appeal a court ruling invalidating its controversial policy banning recipients of EPA grants from serving as agency science advisers. But the agency hints that it may try another means to exclude grant recipients from its advisory panels.

The New York Times: [Roundup maker to pay \\$10 billion to settle cancer suits](#)
Bayer, a chemical and pharmaceutical company who recently bought Monsanto, has agreed to pay over \$10 billion to settle tens of thousands of cancer suits, as well as set aside \$1.25 billion for future cases and to establish an independent expert panel to research glyphosate, the key chemical used in the popular herbicide Roundup. Many regulators, as well as the EPA and NIH, have not found an association between glyphosate and cancer risk.

AIP: [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration leaders clash over Hurricane Dorian scandal](#)
Acting head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Neil Jacobs and other top agency officials are at odds over an independent investigation that concluded he violated the agency's scientific integrity policy during the controversy that erupted last fall over Hurricane Dorian forecasts.

New York Times: [Health officials had to face a pandemic. Then came the death threats.](#)
State and local health officials have found themselves at the center of regular news briefings amid the coronavirus outbreak, making them targets for harassment and threats.

PRWatch: [Facebook creates fact-checking exemption for climate deniers](#)
Last year, Facebook partnered with an organization, Science Feedback, that would bring in teams of Ph.D. climate scientists to evaluate the accuracy of viral content. But now Facebook has reportedly decided to allow its staffers to overrule the climate scientists and make any climate disinformation ineligible for fact-checking by deeming it "opinion."

The Guardian: [US moves to exempt companies from reporting harmful chemical releases](#)
An EPA regulation requires manufacturers to report if they release over 100 pounds of perfluorinated chemicals, PFAS, into waterways annually. However, a new regulation says manufacturers will be exempt from this rule if a PFAS chemical does not exceed 1% of the total mixture being dumped. PFAS chemicals are used in non-stick cookware and weatherproof fabrics and can cause cancer, immune issues, and thyroid disruptions.

Smithsonian: [NASA names D.C. headquarters for "hidden figure" and engineer Mary Jackson](#)
NASA has renamed their DC headquarters to the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters building, honoring the first African American woman to work as an engineer for the agency. Jackson authored about a dozen papers in her two-decade career at NASA and was the manager for Langley's Federal Women's Program, which focused on the hiring and promotion of female scientists, engineers, and mathematicians at NASA.

REGIONAL NEWS

Indiana Public Media: [How redlining, racism harm Black Americans' health](#)
Systemic racism has a huge impact on the health of Black Americans, and not just in the doctor's office. In a Facebook Live event, Side Effects Public Media reporter Darian Benson spoke with three experts from Indiana and Illinois on topics ranging from generational mistrust to the impact of COVID-19.

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Purdue professor appointed to EPA agricultural committee](#)

Charles Santerre, professor of health and human services at Purdue University, is one of 33 people from across the U.S. appointed to the EPA's Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Committee.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Washington Post: [Science is better when we open our doors to immigrants](#)

Trumps war on immigration will be catastrophic to the U.S. scientific enterprise at a time when we should be strengthening it with investments of funding and talent, all while likely having no substantial effect on U.S. unemployment.

New York Magazine: [Global warming is melting our sense of time](#)

David Wallace-Wells on the recent heat wave in Siberia (not covered by the mainstream media), how The extreme weather of the last few summers has already inured us to temperature anomalies like these, and how departures from the historical record will grow only more lethal.

The Intercept: [Scientists pin blame for some coronavirus deaths on air pollution, PFAS, and other chemicals](#)

Almost six months into the coronavirus pandemic, scientists are trying to pinpoint how exactly industrial chemicals make people more susceptible to the coronavirus and how much of the blame for the devastation wrought by the new coronavirus should be laid at the feet of the industry that produces those chemicals.

NPR: [“Like poking a beehive”: The worrisome link between deforestation and disease](#)

A CDC statement that 6 out of every 10 infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic supports researchers claims of a correlation between deforestation and disease outbreaks. As more animals are displaced and human-animal interaction increases, there is more opportunity for disease spread.

InsideClimate News: [As scientists struggle with rollbacks, stay at home orders and funding cuts, citizens fill the gap](#)

Stay-at-home orders have hindered data collection for many field scientists, creating a need for crowd-sourced data. Many participants in citizen science initiatives are looking for ways to fill their time while homebound or furloughed from their jobs because of the pandemic. Others have been roused to fill the void left by cuts to environmental monitoring programs or to document the impact of the federal government's rollbacks of environmental protections.

Yale Environment 360: [From the lab to the field, agriculture seeks to adapt to a warming world](#)

With rising temperatures, the world's food supplies are at risk, with decreasing yields in key staple crops. Researchers and innovators are looking at more resilient crops and farm animals — from heat-resistant wheat, to drought-resistant rice, to Naked Neck chickens that stay cooler.

TAKE ACTION

NRDC.org: [The administration's unprecedented attack on birds](#)

Today, one out of eight bird species worldwide faces extinction and 40 percent of the world's 11,000 avian species are in decline. Now is not the time to treat the mass killings of birds as acceptable collateral damage.

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 ASIU and IU

biology major Emma Hand and CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of English. We're looking for volunteers! 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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