



CLIMATE CORNER

June 2021

By Mark Lichty and Alex Jackson for Brodhead Watershed Association

Defining our climate emergency

From MARK LICHTY, member of BWA's Climate Action Committee:

It is interesting to witness the evolution of the terminology surrounding the climate emergency.

Climate emergency really is the appropriate term for the critical circumstances we now face. Years ago, it was called **global warming**. That became **climate change** when some politicians thought that term too alarmist. A few years ago, I started to use the term **climate crisis**.

Now, I use the term climate emergency. It truly is a climate emergency calling for all hands on deck. Those who have denied the gravity of our climate emergency, and its fossil fuel origins, will find their voices muted by the increased winds and hurricanes they have denied.

From ALEX JACKSON, executive director of BWA:

This emergency is a complicated, multi-generational predicament.

Carbon emissions have a warming time-lag period of many years. Tipping points and positive feedback loops create exponential changes, rather than linear ones. For example, the Arctic Sea ice grows thinner and less extensive; Blue Ocean absorbs more than 90% of incoming solar radiation – whereas the ice-albedo effect reflects nearly 50%-70%. The latent heat of the open, blue ocean further amplifies climate change. Temperature differential between the poles and the Equator declines, increasing the “wobbling” of the jet streams. It's been said: “What happens in the Arctic, does not stay in the Arctic.”

Read more about the Arctic Sea ice: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3bb42858e99d492aaaf980b86bfea757>

How do we address our global ongoing climate emergency? We can raise awareness and, in our personal lives, enjoy our ecosystems. Encourage our local representatives to acknowledge the climate emergency. Reduce our individual carbon footprints. In short, be part of a solution.