



RESEARCH

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Debunked climate email claims return after right-wing media notice top scientist received federal grant

January 14, 2010 10:47 pm ET — 5 Comments

Right-wing media outlets have used a National Science Foundation grant awarded to Pennsylvania State University scientist Michael Mann to study the effects of climate change as an excuse to revive debunked claims about emails that were stolen from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, some of which were written by Mann. Those debunked claims include: that Mann used "tricks" to finesse his data"; that scientists including Mann discussed "efforts to interfere with the peer review process to stifle opposing views"; and that climate scientists like Mann have "knowingly perpetrated a fraud on the global community" with regard to climate change.

Right-wing blogs rehash debunked claims regarding hacked climate emails

Big Gov't's "Hide the Job Decline" post: "Mann is known for using 'tricks' to finesse his data." Writing about the NSF grant in a January 14 Big Government blog post, Mike Flynn referred to Penn State University scientist Michael Mann as an "unintended co-star of the ClimateGate e-mail scandal." He added: "The leaked e-mails revealed collaboration among scientists to stifle dissenting views on the extent of man-made global warming." Flynn also wrote that "Mann is known for using 'tricks' to finesse his data."

Hoft: Mann and other "junk scientists...knowingly perpetrated a fraud on the global community." In a January 14 post on his Gateway Pundit blog, Jim Hoft called the grant "Unreal" because "Climategate Junk Scientist" Mann "was implicated in the global warming email conspiracy." Hoft added that the stolen emails "prove that the junk scientists behind the global warming movement knowingly perpetrated a fraud on the global community."

Fox Nation links to Hoft's post with headline "Climategate Scientist Awarded Stimulus Cash" From FoxNation.com, accessed January 14:

January 14, 2010
09:49 AM EST



Climategate Scientist Awarded Stimulus Cash

43 Comments

NewsBusters' Sheppard: Mann involved "in an international attempt to exaggerate and manipulate climate data in order to advance the myth of manmade global warming." In a January 14 NewsBusters post, associate editor Noel Sheppard referred to Mann's purported "involvement in an international attempt to exaggerate and manipulate climate data in order to advance the myth of manmade global warming" in stating that he "can identify absolutely no media

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coverage concerning" the grant.

5 HOURS AND 31 MINUTES

Right-wing bloggers cite press release from oil industry-funded group

Since 2001, National Center for Public Policy Research received \$390,000 from Exxon Mobil. Hoft, Sheppard, and Flynn all quoted from and linked to a National Center for Public Policy Research [press release](#) about the research grant awarded to Mann. According to *Media Matters for America's* sister organization *Media Matters Action Network*, NCPPR [received](#) \$390,000 in funding from Exxon Mobil from 2001 through 2008. According to the NCPPR's [website](#), the group "advocates private, free market solutions to today's environmental challenges."

Bloggers mislead on Mann's "trick"

"Decline" refers to unreliable tree-ring data, not actual temperatures. In a November 26 [article](#), *The Morning Call* of Allentown, Pennsylvania, reported that Penn State scientist Michael Mann -- whose "trick" was referenced in an [email](#) by CRU director Phil Jones -- "said his trick, or 'trick of the trade,' for the Nature chart was to combine data from tree-ring measurements, which record world temperatures from 1,000 years ago until 1960, with actual temperature readings for 1961 through 1998" because "scientists have discovered that, for temperatures since 1960, tree rings have not been a reliable indicator." In a November 20 post, RealClimate.org's [staff](#), which is comprised of several working climate scientists, including Mann, similarly [stated](#):

As for the 'decline', it is well known that Keith Briffa's maximum latewood tree ring density proxy diverges from the temperature records after 1960 (this is more commonly known as the "divergence problem"-see e.g. the recent discussion in [this paper](#)) and has been discussed in the literature since Briffa et al in *Nature* in 1998 (*Nature*, 391, 678-682). Those authors have always recommend not using the post 1960 part of their reconstruction, and so while 'hiding' is probably a poor choice of words (since it is 'hidden' in plain sight), not using the data in the plot is completely appropriate, as is further research to understand why this happens.

Several scientists have stated that the word "trick" is being misinterpreted. The (UK) *Guardian* [reported](#) in a November 20 article that [Bob Ward](#), director of policy and communications at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics, said of Jones' email: "It does look incriminating on the surface, but there are lots of single sentences that taken out of context can appear incriminating. ... You can't tell what they are talking about. Scientists say 'trick' not just to mean deception. They mean it as a clever way of doing something -- a short cut can be a trick." RealClimate also [explained](#) that "the 'trick' is just to plot the instrumental records along with reconstruction so that the context of the recent warming is clear. Scientists often use the term 'trick' to refer to ... 'a good way to deal with a problem', rather than something that is 'secret', and so there is nothing problematic in this at all."

Flynn misleads in claiming emails "revealed collaboration among scientists to stifle dissenting views" on climate change

Mann email proposing boycott of *Climate Research* cited specific paper. Critics have frequently pointed to a March 11, 2003, [email](#) in which Mann wrote that the paper by Soon and Baliunas "couldn't have cleared a 'legitimate' peer review process anywhere. That leaves only one possibility -- that the peer-review process at Climate Research has been hijacked by a few skeptics on the editorial board." Mann further stated, "I think we have to stop considering 'Climate Research' as a legitimate peer-reviewed journal. Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal. We would also need to consider what we tell or request of our more reasonable colleagues who currently sit on the editorial board ..."

NY Times: Editors said "the analysis was deeply flawed," and publisher said "the paper should not have been published as written." *The New York Times* [reported](#) on August 5, 2003, that the Soon-Baliunas paper "has been heavily criticized by many scientists, including several of the journal editors. The editors said last week that whether or not the conclusions were correct, the analysis was deeply flawed." The *Times* further noted that the "publisher of the journal, Dr. Otto Kinne, and an editor who recently became editor in chief, Dr. Hans von Storch, both said that in retrospect the paper

should not have been published as written" and that von Storch resigned, "saying he disagreed with the peer-review policies." The *Times* report further noted that "[t]he study in Climate Research was in part underwritten by \$53,000 from the American Petroleum Institute, the voice of the oil industry." Additionally, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* **reported** that "scientists contacted by The Chronicle complained about the way their work was cited" in the paper.

Climate Research publisher: "CR should have requested appropriate revisions of the manuscript prior to publication." On September 19, 2003, Kinne **stated** of the paper's conclusions, "While these statements may be true, the critics point out that they cannot be concluded convincingly from the evidence provided in the paper. CR should have requested appropriate revisions of the manuscript prior to publication."

Climate experts, fact-checkers dispute notion that emails undermine climate change consensus

Michaels: CRU emails mean "the EPA has lost the basis for its finding." In a December 18 *Wall Street Journal* **op-ed**, Cato Institute fellow and author Patrick Michaels claimed that the CRU emails "have dramatically weakened the case for emissions reductions" and that "[t]he EPA claimed to rely solely upon compendia of the refereed literature such as the IPCC reports, in order to make its finding of endangerment from carbon dioxide. Now that we know that literature was biased by the heavy-handed tactics of the East Anglia mob, the EPA has lost the basis for its finding."

PolitiFact: "The e-mails do not prove that climate change is a hoax." Addressing Sen. James Inhofe's (R-OK) claim that the emails show the science behind climate change "has been pretty well debunked," **PolitiFact.com** rated the claim "False," noting that "[i]ndependent of CRU's data, agencies and academics all over the world are coming to essentially the same conclusion: Climate change is happening."

FactCheck.org: "[T]here's still plenty of evidence that the earth is getting warmer and that humans are largely responsible." FactCheck.org **concluded** that claims that the emails show climate change science is fraudulent are "far wide of the mark," adding that "many of the e-mails that are being held up as 'smoking guns' have been misrepresented by global-warming skeptics eager to find evidence of a conspiracy. And even if they showed what the critics claim, there remains ample evidence that the earth is getting warmer." FactCheck.org further noted that the IPCC report "incorporates data from three working groups, each of which made use of data from a huge number of sources -- of which CRU was only one."

Associated Press analysis: "[T]he messages don't support claims that the science of global warming was faked." After "an exhaustive review" of the emails, the AP **concluded** that "[e]-mails stolen from climate scientists show they stonewalled skeptics and discussed hiding data -- but the messages don't support claims that the science of global warming was faked, according to an exhaustive review by The Associated Press." The AP analysis further stated, "None of the e-mails flagged by the AP and sent to three climate scientists viewed as moderates in the field changed their view that global warming is man-made and a threat."

1,700 scientists sign statement reaffirming position that warming is "unequivocal." Following the release of the reportedly stolen emails, more than 1,700 scientists from the United Kingdom signed a **statement** responding "to the ongoing questioning of core climate science and methods." It said: "We, members of the UK science community, have the utmost confidence in the observational evidence for global warming and the scientific basis for concluding that it is due primarily to human activities. The evidence and the science are deep and extensive. They come from decades of painstaking and meticulous research, by many thousands of scientists across the world who adhere to the highest levels of professional integrity. That research has been subject to peer review and publication, providing traceability of the evidence and support for the scientific method." It continued

The science of climate change draws on fundamental research from an increasing number of disciplines, many of which are represented here. As professional scientists, from students to senior professors, we uphold the findings of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, which concludes that 'Warming of the climate system is unequivocal' and that 'Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations'.

Nature: "Nothing in the e-mails undermines the scientific case that global warming is real." A December 2 [editorial](#) in the science journal *Nature* stated: "Nothing in the e-mails undermines the scientific case that global warming is real -- or that human activities are almost certainly the cause. That case is supported by multiple, robust lines of evidence, including several that are completely independent of the climate reconstructions debated in the e-mails." Also from the editorial:

The stolen e-mails have prompted queries about whether *Nature* will investigate some of the researchers' own papers. One e-mail talked of displaying the data using a 'trick' -- slang for a clever (and legitimate) technique, but a word that denialists have used to accuse the researchers of fabricating their results. It is *Nature's* policy to investigate such matters if there are substantive reasons for concern, but nothing we have seen so far in the e-mails qualifies.

AMS: Impact on climate change science of emails "very limited." Following the release of the stolen emails, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) [reaffirmed its Statement on Climate Change](#), stating that it "is based on a robust body of research reported in the peer-reviewed literature." AMS further stated: "For climate change research, the body of research in the literature is very large and the dependence on any one set of research results to the comprehensive understanding of the climate system is very, very small. Even if some of the charges of improper behavior in this particular case turn out to be true -- which is not yet clearly the case -- the impact on the science of climate change would be very limited."

AAAS reaffirms position on climate change. In a December 4 [statement](#), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) reaffirmed its position, "based on multiple lines of scientific evidence" that "global climate change caused by human activities is now underway, and it is a growing threat to society." AAAS chief executive officer Alan I. Leshner stated, "The vast preponderance of evidence, based on years of research conducted by a wide array of different investigators at many institutions, clearly indicates that global climate change is real, it is caused largely by human activities, and the need to take action is urgent."

Prominent scientists send letter to Congress "to set the record straight." In a December 4 [letter](#) to Congress, 29 prominent scientists, including 11 members of the National Academy of Scientists, stated, "The body of evidence that human activity is the dominant cause of global warming is overwhelming. The content of the stolen emails has no impact whatsoever on our overall understanding that human activity is driving dangerous levels of global warming." Noting the "multiple independent lines of evidence" supporting the case for manmade climate change, the scientists stated, "Even without including analyses from the UK research center from which the emails were stolen, the body of evidence underlying our understanding of human-caused global warming remains robust."

UCS: "The e-mails provide no information that would affect the scientific understanding of climate change." The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has [stated](#) that "[t]he e-mails provide no information that would affect the scientific understanding of climate change, as many contrarians are falsely claiming. For years, thousands of scientists working at climate research centers around the world have carefully and rigorously reached a consensus on the extent of climate change, the urgency of the problem, and the role human activity plays in causing it." UCS further stated: "The findings of the USGCRP, IPCC and other scientific bodies are based on the work of thousands of scientists from hundreds of research institutions. The University of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit (CRU) is just one among many such research institutions. Even without data from CRU, there is still an overwhelming body of evidence that human activity triggering dangerous levels of global warming."

— G.L.

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by galleleonardo (3 hours and 53 minutes ago)

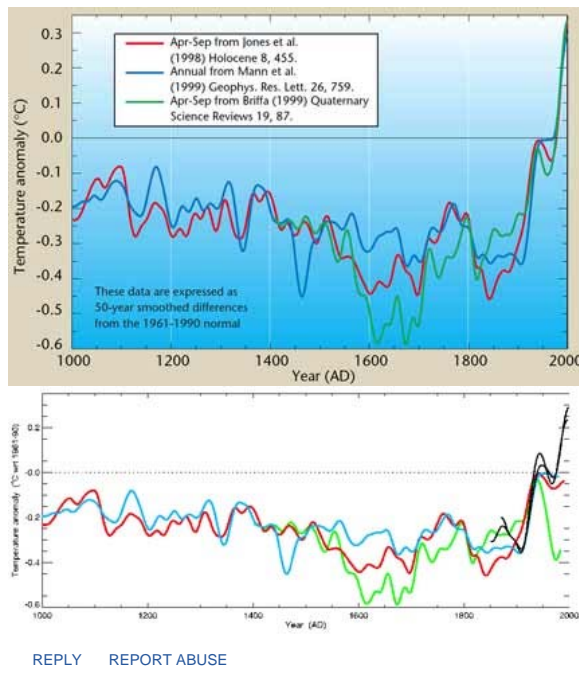
1


Wow. You guys are *still* putting up the decline fight? Still even dragging out the comedic ReallyClimate/Schmidt "hidden in plain sight" statement? Give it up already. Just because you repeat it a dozen times per month will not make it any more valid. It was a joke from day one.

I would like for anyone who claims they are objective in this debate to please compare the two graphs

below and explain how exactly the decline was "hidden in plain sight." They are both derived from the [UEA 11/24/09 statement](#) about the CRU scandal, the only difference being that the bottom graph was updated with the post-1960 data from Briffa 2000.


Compare the green lines. The top image is the graph from the WMO Statement Phil Jones was working on with Mike's *Nature* trick applied. The bottom is the appended version released by the UEA to "clarify" matters. Is *that* decline hidden in plain sight? Not even close. Give me a break already.



 by [gallleonardo](#) (3 hours and 34 minutes ago) 1

As for the *Nature* editorial MMfA links to, if you haven't already read it in its entirety, [please do](#). Could they have sounded any more anti-science? They must have forgotten [their own policies regarding availability of data](#). I imagine any true scientist cringes when reading it. David R. Bell would be one scientist who was none too happy (click [here](#) if you can log into *Nature* or [here](#) to get it for free from none other than everyone's old friend, Stephen McIntyre. Best of luck with your Inquisition.

[REPLY](#) [REPORT ABUSE](#)

 by [gallleonardo](#) (3 hours and 8 minutes ago) 1

Given MMfA's outrage about that "oil industry funded group," I wonder if there is any evidence that the CRU is funded by "Big Oil."

Check and check.

Shell and British Petroleum? You don't say. They went for the twofer plus [Greenpeace](#) to boot. Swell. Notice the use of the term "globalisation agenda" in the Greenpeace document? Here is the sentence in full so you can skip the tired "taken out of context" excuses:

One particular thing you said - and we agreed - was about the IPCC reports and the broader climate negotiations were working to the globalisation agenda driven by organisations like the WTO.

Some more comedy from the MMfA story:

The leaked e-mails revealed collaboration among scientists to stifle dissenting views on the extent of man-made global warming.

Check and check.

Mann is known for using 'tricks' to finesse his data.

Check.

[J]unk scientists behind the global warming movement knowingly perpetrated a fraud on the global community.

Check and check.

Cheers!

[REPLY](#) [REPORT ABUSE](#)



by eweston8542983 (13 seconds ago)

More **bad** news for our atmosphere, and those who depend on it.

[REPLY](#) [REPORT ABUSE](#)



by SLR TX (1 hour and 34 minutes ago)

1

I see that galileotardo has a lot of time on its hands. The conservatards are getting desperate, so they're paying their pimply-faced interns to work over time on their troll posts.

The only decline that's being hidden is the decline of the denialists' religion. They play "tricks" with reality to hide their own decline. They drink their kool-aid and eat their cherries.

They can deny all they want. The international conspiracy to tax all conservatards to death marches on regardless of the denialists rants!

"Denialism is the employment of rhetorical tactics to give the appearance of argument or legitimate debate, when in actuality there is none. These false arguments are used when one has few or no facts to support one's viewpoint against a scientific consensus or against overwhelming evidence to the contrary. They are effective in distracting from actual useful debate using emotionally appealing, but ultimately empty and illogical assertions."

<http://scienceblogs.com/denialism/about.php>

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