

Hardly a week goes by without reports in the national media of new evidence of Global Warming. From extended droughts in the southwest to severe ice storms in the northeast, from melting ice caps in Antarctica to thawing permafrost in Alaska – there is a growing recognition that the climate is changing. Each year of the 1990's was the warmest on record, making it the warmest decade in 1400 years.

In New England – winters are shorter, spring comes earlier, and storms are more severe. The Ice Storm of 1998 caused devastating damage to the region's Northern Forests, that resulted in power outages in Northern New England and Quebec which lasted as long as three weeks. In 1999, the grass was greener in New England in December than it was in August, and more people were playing golf than skiing in early January of 2000. The New England Regional Assessment on climate change predicts that the average daily temperature of 51.3 degrees in Boston will rise by another 6 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century, which would make its climate comparable to that of Richmond, Virginia or Atlanta, Georgia.

## Addressing Climate Change

*By linking research institutions to science centers and the public*

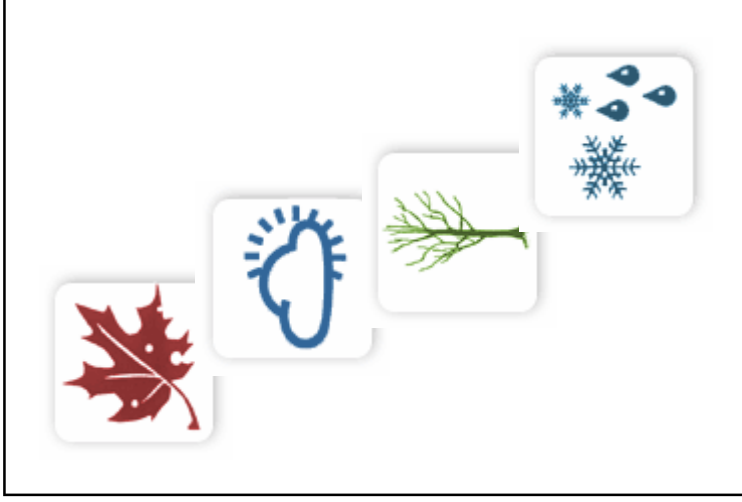
Recognizing the disparity between the public's understanding of Global Warming & the science of climate change - research scientists, informal science educators & environmental leaders formed a partnership to educate the public about the possible effects of climate change on the communities & ecosystems of New England.

NESCC combines the scientific expertise of internationally recognized research & academic institutions with the experience of informal educational institutions to develop exhibits, educational programs, & outreach projects for more than 4 million visitors to the region's science centers & museums.



**New England  
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### Educating the Public

Since 1999, The New England Science Center has grown from its original fourteen New Hampshire members to over 30 members throughout New England. The Collaborative's partners are drawn from science centers, environmental organizations, and scientific research institutions.

NESCC's research institutions are recognized around the world for the work they have done to establish the relationship between atmospheric chemistry and physical climate change. By linking academic and research institutions with credible experts in the field of Global Climate Change to science and nature centers that can interpret this information for the public, NESCC has succeeded in incorporating the topic of climate change into the programmatic offerings of some of New England's most visible and prestigious science and nature venues.

NESCC tailors the content of its programs to fit how different audiences in informal educational venues learn best. The content is designed for a variety of formats from hands-on exhibits to citizen science projects, from formal presentations by well-known scientists to workshops on specific topics held at research institutions, from articles that can be included in the publications of its members to informative programs for broadcast on radio or television.

**Professional Development**—NESCC members are invited to participate in three staff development days a year. This program gives members a chance to learn more about climate change research, share teaching techniques and get to know one another. Meetings in the past have been held at the Woods Hole Research Center, Stonyfield Farms Corporate Headquarters and the New England Aquarium. Presenters typically include a scientist, a science center educator and a guest speaker. Past speakers have included: Ross Gelbspan, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *The Heat is on*, and Joel Scheraga, Director of the United States Global Climate Research Project in Washington, DC.

**Exhibits** - NESCC has produced a computer based exhibit on climate change now on display in nine science centers throughout the region. The Collaborative is also developing a concept for interactive, inquiry-driven exhibits, simulation games, and online educational programs that interpret the effects of climate change on the communities and ecosystems that are the focus of the participating institutions.

**Meet The Scientists** - Representatives from collaborating institutions attend daylong programs in which science center educators meet with scientists to discuss their findings and learn about the tools and methods they use to study climate change. Originally intended for participating institutions, these sessions are drawing an increasing number of people from government agencies, NGO's, and community based organizations.

**Radio Program** - This weekly series on climate change began in May 2002 and is aired on Tuesdays each week. The two-minute segment features climate change stories and scientific developments. You can read the program transcript or hear the production by going to [www.weathernotebook.org](http://www.weathernotebook.org) and clicking on the *Global Climate Change Series*.

**Scientific Review** - The success of the Collaborative is predicated upon the trust between research scientists and informal science educators that climate change will be accurately presented to the public. The educational content of its projects need to be reviewed by scientists qualified to assure its accuracy.

**Speakers Bureau** - Available to participating members for special events or board meetings. Speakers are drawn from the fields of climatology, meteorology, ice core research, forest ecology, business, and public policy.

**Teaching Tools** - NESCC has developed a teaching tool and Presenter's Guide for use in classrooms and in the field. The materials fit into a backpack and are designed to expand or contract according to the audience and available teaching time.

The **Climate Change Backpack** contains graphs, maps, experiments, a climate change play, an imitation ice core, a compact fluorescent light bulb, a clothesline and pins, and a bookmark listing websites to consult for more information.

