

World will end by 2060 unless we take action

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The world will end by 2060—unless critical preventive action is taken. The environment is destabilizing due to human activity and ecosystems are collapsing. Within the next four decades, the planet is predicted to be in turmoil from extreme weather conditions.

The environment is nearing a catastrophic tipping point, according to the United Nations and the World Bank. It has been confirmed that the climate is changing so rapidly that unless immediate action is taken, people everywhere will be faced with gross food and water shortages.

It has also been noted that even if humans worldwide stopped all planet harming activity today, that the plant will still see 1/3 of its species go extinct from global warming.

"Worst case scenario, the consensus among scientists is a 30 percent loss," Jim Hartmann, Environmental Science teacher, said.

In a study done by the United Kingdom's Department of Energy, the equator will become 4°C warmer by the year 2060, an estimate placing the date 50 years earlier than all other past predictions. It has been reported that this shift at the equator will cause mass flooding, heat waves and other weather extremes to become the norm.

Delegates representing 192 sovereign countries convened in Copenhagen, Denmark to discuss what action may be taken to prevent the predicted

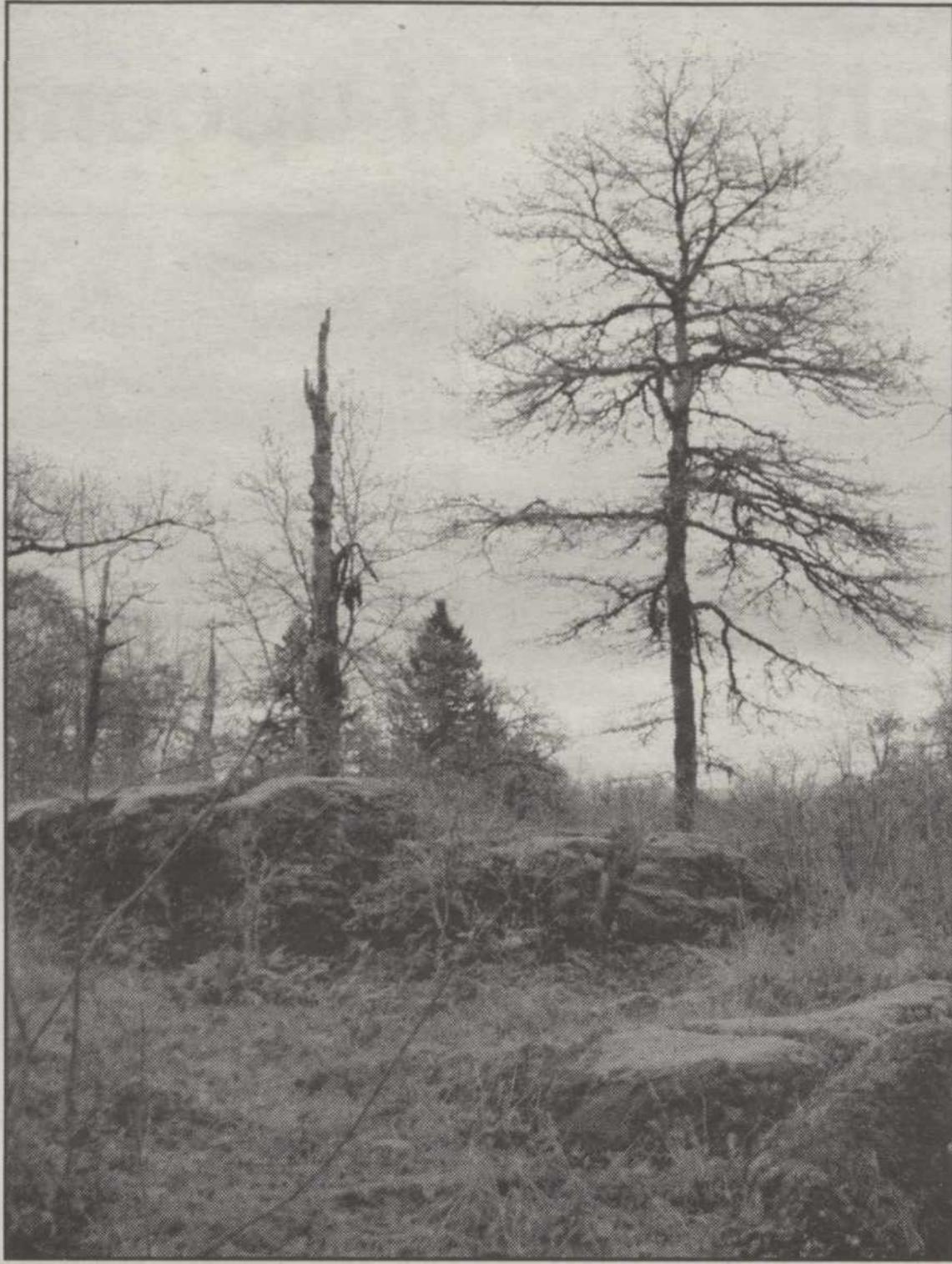


Photo by Mark Poppert

A scenic patch of forest in Camassia. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, lessening the impact of global warming. Without the trees, the temperature will rise more rapidly, making deforestation a global crisis. The Copenhagen accord suggests nations reimburse countries that don't cut down their trees.

apocalyptic symptoms of global warming. The summit on climate change was resolved on Dec. 19 by offering a proposal to cut carbon emissions greatly by the year 2020.

Early stages of the discussions were marked by proposals attempting to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050 and limiting rising temperatures to a 1.5°C fluctuation. These proposals were abandoned due to a nearly unanimous lack of support from developed countries.

The prevailing proposal rested upon the United

States granting developing countries \$30 billion within the proceeding three years, limiting temperature fluxuation to 2°C averages. To protect trees that absorb CO₂, governments are promising additional money to countries that reduce rates of deforestation in their respective countries.

This proposal was primarily supported by the United States, China, India, South Africa and Brazil. Whether support of this accord is unanimous amongst the remaining 187 countries still remains to be decided.

The environmental discussion itself had drawn large support globally. The day before the conference ended, several thousand activists arrived in Denmark. They flooded the streets surrounding the conference, attempting to urge delegate to pursue a more forceful proposal. Local police were called and detained roughly 1,000 activists after a street rally went awry.

However, the Copenhagen talks were brought under scrutiny after a document labeled "Danish Text" was leaked to local newspapers.

This document shows favor to developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, but undermines developing countries by demanding they meet strenuous requirements before receiving any financial aid.

The conference was further brought into scrutiny after a series of e-mail were hacked from a British server. These e-mails suggested that environmentalists were intentionally skewing data to make global warming appear more pressing than it may actually be.

"I didn't see

anything incriminating," Hartmann said.

Regardless of legitimacy of the e-mails, the conference still delivered a proposal. Several countries, many in the European Union, voiced concern over this agreement. A primary grievance was founded on the proposal not being legally binding.

According to Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of Great Britain, the proposal needs to become legally binding quickly. Other government figures, such as the president of the European Union, have

The facts on Copenhagen

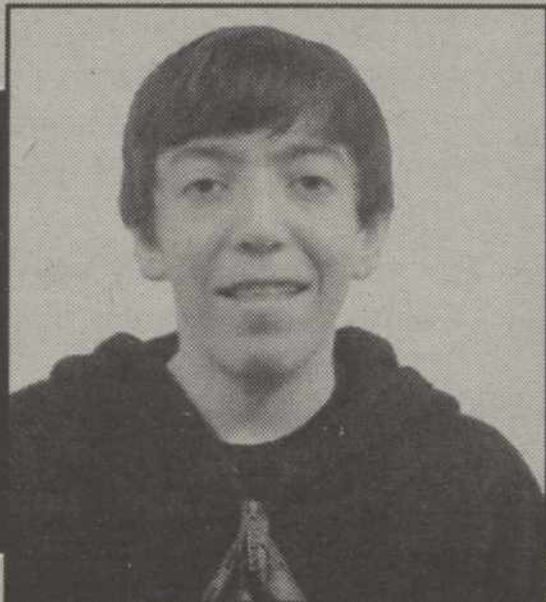
- The equator will become 4°C warmer by the year 2060
- 1/3 of species will go extinct because of climate change, even if we take precautions
- Proposal reached in Copenhagen would grant \$30 billion to developing countries and limit temperature fluctuations to 2°C averages
- Five countries (US, China, India, South Africa, Brazil) support proposal
- 187 countries still need to show whether they support the proposal

voiced similar beliefs.

"The only way they'll do it is if there's massive pressure from the people," Hartmann said. "I'm not sure if our governments are able to handle this. Congress is good at preparing for the next election... not the next generation."

STUDENTS speak out

What is your opinion about students posting photos of illegal actions on Facebook?



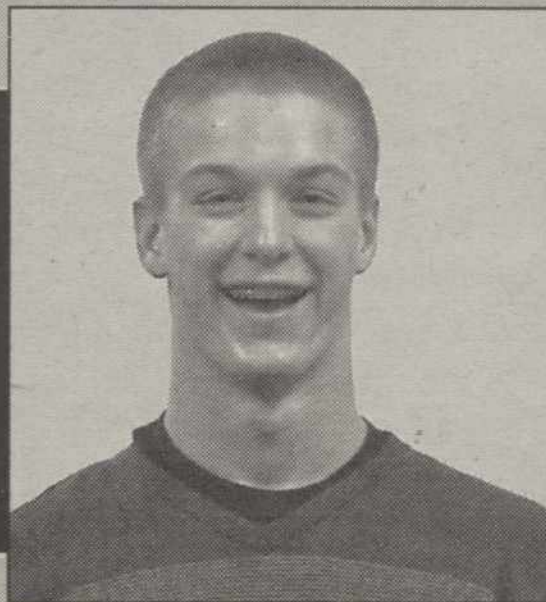
"I guess it's not too bad, but if other people don't want to see them then they don't have to look."

—Cameron Minson, freshman



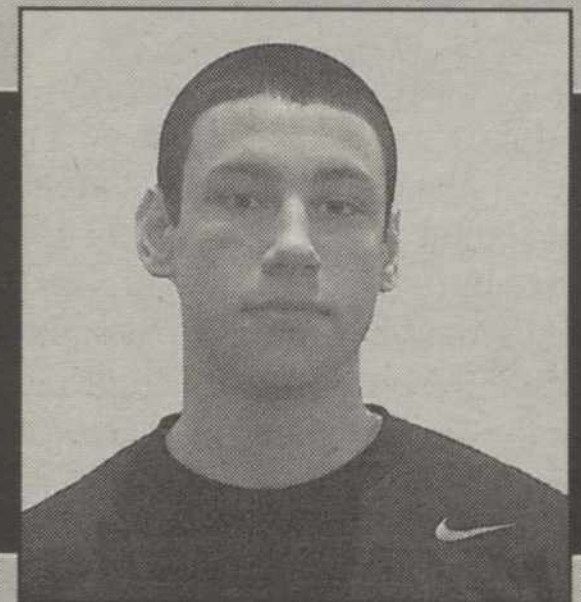
"It's bad and they are just asking to get into trouble. There is no point to putting things like that on there."

—Sarita Hemmady, sophomore



"I think it is just asking for trouble and nothing good comes out of it."

—Christian Wilson, junior



"Kids have the right to express themselves the way they like and if they want to post things like that let them deal with the consequences."

—Jeff Bush, senior