Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Periodicals

"Ice Cores and the Temporalities of the Global Environment"

Antonello, Alessandro, and Mark Carey

Antonello, Alessandro, and Mark Carey. "Ice Cores and the Temporalities of the Global Environment." *Environmental Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2017): 181-203. doi:10.1215/22011919-4215202.

Ice cores from Antarctica, Greenland, and the high-mountain cryosphere have become essential sources of evidence on the climate dating back nearly 800,000 years. Earth scientists use ice cores to understand the chemical composition of the atmosphere, which has been trapped in the air bubbles between the ice crystals as they form annually; this knowledge also feeds into modeling the climate's future. Ice cores are not simply important sources of environmental knowledge, but have become important elements of global environmental representations and politics since the 1980s. Ice cores do a lot of work. This article is specifically concerned with examining how the practices involved in drilling, analyzing, discussing, and using ice cores for both science and broader climate or environmental policies and cultures take part in constituting the temporalities of the global environment. We suggest that ice core discourses have constituted and advanced specific textures and sensibilities of time in relation to Earth's past, the history of humans as both species and civilization, and certain apocalyptic and determined futures. While the evidence from ice cores is meant to point toward obvious choices to control our global future, the temporalities of ice cores might not lead the same way. This article joins an increasing concern in the environmental humanities with temporalities, and encourages greater attention to temporalities in environmental history. (Text from authors' abstract)

© Alessandro Antonello and Mark Carey 2017. *Environmental Humanities* is available online only and is published under a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0).

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/181antonello.pdf

Related links:

Periodicals Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Ice Cores and the Temporalities of the Global Environment"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8251
Print date: 14 November 2026 19:02:36

- *Environmental Humanities* website
  http://environmentalhumanities.org/
- *Environmental Humanities* 9, no. 2
  https://read.dukeupress.edu/environmental-humanities/issue/9/2

Periodicals Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Ice Cores and the Temporalities of the Global Environment"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8251
Print date: 14 November 2026 19:02:36