

I am a member to Coral Listers, it's kind of a scientific coral reef blog site. Whenever I come across an interesting debate or point of view I like to broadcast it here. I take no credit for the text except for the fact that I like to share with you all. I especially like the way our friend Martin Moe expresses himself in this one and give credit to Quenton Dokken for bringing it into focus.

Walt

Good Day All;

Social and economic practice do not necessarily follow the constructs of science and certainly not the realities of the limits of nature. In economic and social science forums, rarely have I heard discussed the fact that there are very real limits to the level at which the natural systems and resources can be impacted before the living resource and/or system ceases to function in a normal way, if at all. The belief seems to be that natural habitats, wild populations, and the cycles of ecosystem dynamics can be compromised infinitely to serve the needs and wants of humans. The fact is that nature did not evolve in a manner to be sustainable under the variety and quantity of insults and compromises that humans inflict. Nor is nature geared to adapt on a human generational time scale. Every environmental issue we face today can be discussed in terms of lack of understanding/acceptance of the fact that nature can only be compromised to a limited extent before it fails. Our regulatory system of issuing permits is based on the belief that nature can be compromised infinitely. Yes, society must have jobs and business opportunities to exist and flourish.

Yes, there must be access to natural resources to meet the needs and wants of humans/society. But, at some point planning and permitting must factor the limits of nature into the model. Nature does not take into account an individual's or community's culture, history, religion, uniqueness, dreams, financial need, property rights, or any other purely human contrivance. In and of itself, nature is a perpetual motion machine. Nature will function just fine until something or someone disrupts its cycles to a point that the engine stops. Very clearly we can see the train coming at us and we don't seem to be able to get off the track.

Quenton Dokken, Ph.D.

President/CEO

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Well said, Quenton. Here's another way to express it.

We do have a balanced approach to the environment. Picture a seesaw... with population growth on one end and industrial economic growth on the other. The fulcrum is technology. As population growth increases that end of the seesaw dips a bit, so the industrial economy then has the opportunity (demand) to expand and counter the increase in population; and the balance is restored.

The fulcrum of technology groans a bit, but industrial development shores it up with green revolutions, chemical magic, carbon dioxide production, new ways to harvest natural resources, and fossil fuel exploitation, err, make that fossil fuel research and development. And that stimulates more population growth and creates a dip of the population end of the seesaw. Then the Industrial economic end of seesaw rises a bit, stimulating population growth back to balance with another groan from the fulcrum, which is quickly made all better by advances in industrial technology. The balance holds tenaciously through the repetition of the cycles and all is good, until, until, the fulcrum just can't continue to "make it all better" and crumbles under the weight of humanity. But don't worry, we, most of us alive in this glorious time of industrial growth and consumer comfort will be gone before the environmental fan is hit by the excrement of human civilization, so what do we care what happens after we are gone. Unfortunately, that attitude, "don't care what happens after I'm gone" is far too prevalent in society today. Will we restore a sustainable balance to the seesaw and create a stable fulcrum in time to maintain a functional and progressive civilization? I really, really, hope so. I know, I know, think positive, work hard to develop constructive solutions to our problems, and I'm trying, but it's difficult to do.

Martin