

Editor of The New Yorker:

Bill McKibben's latest piece ("Reflections: How Extreme Weather is Shrinking the Planet", November 26, 2018, issue) triggered some reflections of my own.

I was born the year McKibben published *The End of Nature* in this magazine. Those were the golden days of climate change. The science had become accurate enough to ascertain high probability of human-induced global warming, yet avoiding major effects was within reach. World leaders could have done something, but they decided to play Russian Roulette with billions of lives on the line.

By the time I hit puberty, in the early aughts, some effects of climate change were already before me: the road of my family's beach house in Brazil began crumbling because sea-level rise increased the road's vulnerability to storm surges. This motivated me to study the vagaries of the oceans and climate. Several years later, when I was in graduate school, in San Diego, California was facing its worst drought in decades and deadly wild fires spread across the Western US, sometimes not far from home.

Over the time span of my schooling, from kindergarten to doctorate, climate science has come a long way. We not only confirmed what we already knew in the late eighties, but also quantified some changes in the climate system and improved the skills of computer models that explore future scenarios. Climate policy, however, hasn't kept pace. And the consequences of this lagging are dire: my generation will likely experience increasing climate-related catastrophes in the next couple of decades.

There isn't much time left to act. The stakes couldn't be higher, yet most of our leaders are oblivious to the problem. They failed us in the late eighties, and they are failing us now.

Yours in despair,
CB Rocha, Nov. 2018.