than the bottom 90 percent. Staggeringly, the nation's top 0.1 percent make an income on average of over 184 times the bottom 90 percent.[10]

This widening wealth gap threatens mobility, education, food security, and access to health care. It also damages our collective civic life. Sociologist Thomas Shapiro argues that wealth disparities are closely tied to racial inequities, in what he describes as a dangerously combined "toxic inequality."[11] The challenge that economic inequality represents in the long view is deeply structural, eroding core values of national solidarity and threatening "functional citizenship" for large numbers of Americans. Political philosopher and life-long activist Noam Chomsky, writing about the concentration of wealth and power, is bitterly direct: he titled his 2017 book and film *Requiem for the American Dream*.[12]

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While the underlying causes (those described and many others) will challenge conservation now and in the long term, the impact of the 2016 election will have immediate and damaging consequences.

First, there has been and will continue to be a clawback of constructive response to climate change. As Amanda Erickson wrote in the *Washington Post*, "climate change denial is not incidental to a nationalist, populist agenda, it's central to it." Because climate change is a global problem and international cooperation is a prerequisite for action, climate change is an inconvenient truth that conflicts with the "America First" worldview.[13] Climate change denial also feeds the populist anger at elites and experts. Tom Nichols,

professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College has noted: "To reject the advice of experts is to assert autonomy, a way for Americans to demonstrate their independence from nefarious elites—and insulate their increasingly fragile egos from ever being told they're wrong."[14]

The climate change reversals begin with the legitimizing of climate-change deniers—and appointing them to positions of authority, such as Scott Pruitt as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Over time, positions as deputy directors, advisors, counselors, program leaders, and others will be filled with climate change skeptics. They are likely to lead the steady retreat of federal activity from proactive response to climate change impacts—even as these impacts become more pronounced. The official strategy will be to deny and denounce future projections.

From these positions of federal authority, climate science (and the critical data it generates), mitigation programs, and international commitments will be scrutinized, and the Trump administration will seek to abandon them, in some cases succeeding (such as the Paris Accord). Suppression of climate science has been and will continue to be quick and severe—selected websites (such as those on Arctic climate change) were deleted within days of Trump's inauguration, and more continue to go dark. Climate change research will be targeted for reduction or elimination—an effort to stop the flow of facts at the source. Essential programs such as NASA earth sciences research, beaming critical data from its satellites back to Earth, will be threatened. Attempts will be made to purge long-term data sets, eliminate field stations, and shutter climate change research centers. The

intentional interruption of data flow has cascading and deleterious effects on new scientific understanding, evaluating management actions for effectiveness, developing sound policy alternatives, and smart decision making. Even modest gaps in time-series data sets (such as the timing of migratory movements of birds or snowpack measurements) can substantially reduce the value and robustness of the data; that is the intent, of course.

The abandonment of national climate change actions will necessarily be incremental and haphazard, as they have been established across a variety of federal agencies and their cancellation or reduction may require congressional approval. Just in the spring of 2017 alone, the administration's Department of Transportation began rolling back new fuel-economy standards for cars, the Environmental Protection Agency rejected President Obama's Clean Power Plan, and President Trump theatrically announced withdrawal from the Paris Accord, the major international agreement on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation. Not all of the attempted climate change reversals will succeed—there are substantial economic, social, and even national security interests that will push back, along with many states. But even though climate change is an underlying cause creating fundamental transitions in the national economy, environment, and society, its denial will remain a core strategy of the populist movement.

Second, there will likely be a retreat from large landscape conservation—that is, the need to assemble and co-manage lands and waters to reflect the landscape-level requirements of wildlife, forests, and other ecosystems. Carefully built

partnerships between federal agencies, state governments, and local resource managers, such as the successful Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the emerging Sage Grouse Conservation Plan, will be threatened with defunding or termination. Conservation actions undertaken by the Obama administration, such as its active use of the Antiquities Act, will be targeted for reversal or reduction. A test case is likely to be Bear's Ears National Monument, given its size (1,351,849 acres), location (the conservative state of Utah), and the innovative engagement of the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe, and Pueblo of Zuni. Policies carefully crafted to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, such as those emanating from the report *Revisiting Leopold* described in chapter 2, will be challenged, with the intent to rescind them in the vain hope that out-of-date twentieth-century policies will protect special economic interests from the need to adapt and change.

The attacks are already being characterized as a defense of "states' rights," "private property rights," and opposition to "federal government overreach." Agencies will be silenced to prevent "mission creep" (in reality, collaboration), and interagency task forces, working groups, advisory boards, and consultations will be suspended, weakened by neglect or direct elimination, or ignored. Some of the more extreme proposals, such as moving the Department of the Interior headquarters from the nation's capital to somewhere in the western United States or transferring significant amounts of federal land to the states, will likely be rejected but will nevertheless require opposition groups to expend precious

time and resources countering even the most obviously injurious of proposals.

Third, there will be the erosion of science (not just climate science) from its proper role of informing policy to the marginalized position of "organizational pest." Coming is a kind of American Harperism—Canada's experience with the silencing of environmental science by pinpoint budget cuts and removal of scientific advice from decision making.[15] The erosion begins at the White House, which (as of mid-2017) has neither nominated nor appointed an individual to the position of science advisor to the president, a position first established by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1941 and filled by every president since. The need for the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the science-dependent Council on Environmental Quality has been questioned if not outright mocked by Trump advisors, and will likely be reduced in scale, scope, and influence.

This attack on science is not unprecedented; a metaphor of violence is expressed in books such as *Science under Siege* (1998), *The Republican War on Science* (2005), and *The War on Science* (2016).[16] The midterm outlook is grim. Ongoing science will be strategically assaulted by discontinuing inventory and monitoring programs that collect and manage crucial long-term data sets, eliminating scientists' positions on the grounds of budget constraints, and muzzling outspoken science professionals by rule, travel restriction, transfer to nonscience positions, and outright censorship. Talented scientists will depart in frustration, and then, when the programs are weakened, those remaining will face threats of elimination based on "poor performance,"

"accountability," or "cost cutting." Science integrity offices established during the last administration will be stripped of responsibility and authority, freeing policy makers from restrictions enacted to combat misconduct and misuse of science. Science advisor positions will be either left empty or staffed by politicized professionals, and scientific advisory groups will be eliminated or filled with pseudoscientists and special interest representatives adhering to the administration's strategy of weakening science.

The irresponsibility in denying climate change and the dereliction of duty to respond to its consequences, the dim understanding of threats caused by species decline and extinction, a toxic disregard for rising inequality, the retreat from large-landscape conservation, and the sustained attack on science now underway will continue throughout the Trump administration and perhaps beyond. All of these actions and inactions can deeply hinder and harm conservation. Truly, there is rough water ahead.