

Alas, Now Even The Weather Channel Has Lost Its Way

By Joe D'Aleo, [Icecap](#)

Forecast Earth, the latest bad decision by The Weather Channel, is yet another example of how a good idea can go bad. The Weather Channel was started 25 years ago with the idea of providing reliable and accurate weather information when you need it. That meant 24 hours a day 7 days a week. I was very fortunate to be one of the first people who had the challenge of being involved, as its first Director of Meteorology.

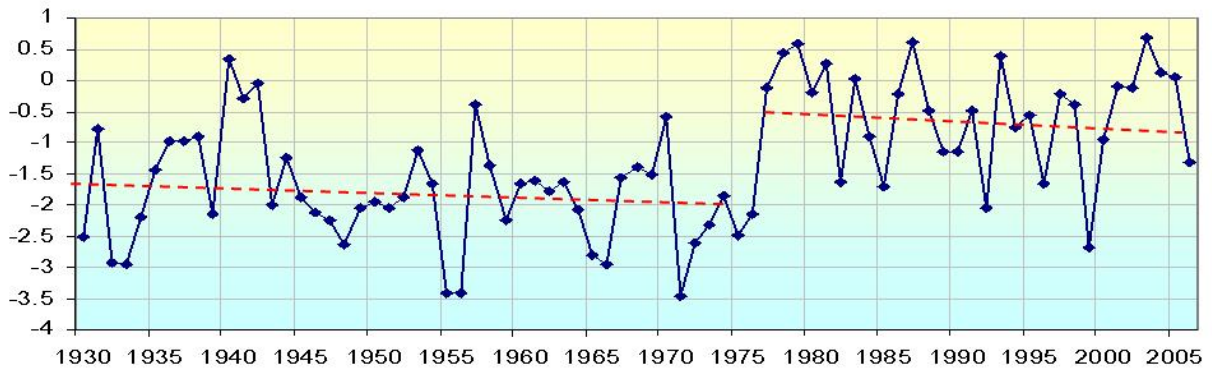
It has taken a turn in recent years to being more and more part time weather and part-time “Discovery Channel”. Now with Forecast Earth, advocacy and hype have replaced down to earth real-time weather coverage and forecasting. You don't get weather when you need it anymore, just when they choose to give it to you. A few years back, they were embarrassed when an outbreak of tornadoes had people tuning to The Weather Channel and finding a special about growing flower bulbs in Holland.

Now Heidi Cullen is telling us what disasters await if the most souped up climate models are right and the earth warms significantly. I guess they ran out of storm stories recounting real weather disasters. They are now inventing possible future ones with disaster stories reminiscent of ‘An Inconvenient Truth’ or ‘Day after Tomorrow’.

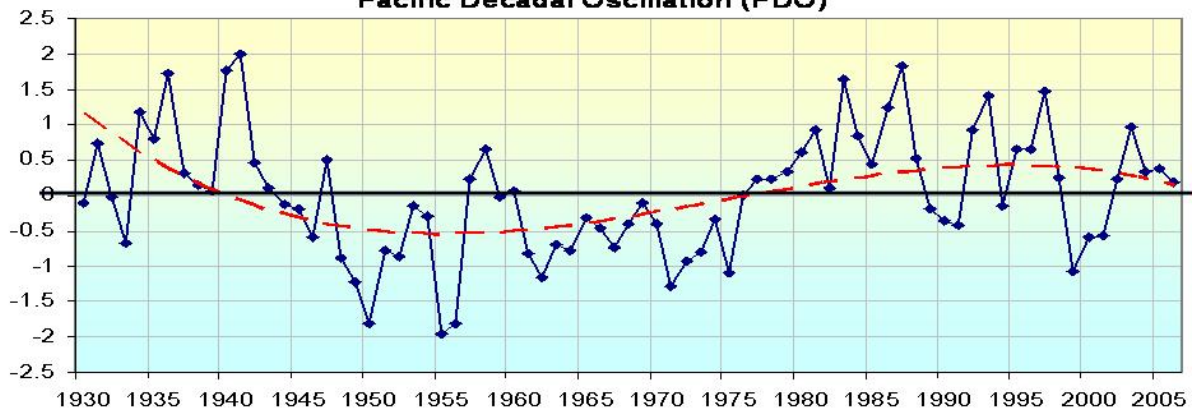
And ironically not only are they buying without question the faulty climate models for the future, they even get the actual changes that have occurred wrong. “Alaska Meltdown” a recent featured story still on the website is the latest example.

The so-called climatologist specialist who just six months ago, called for the American Meteorological Society (AMS) decertification of any broadcasters not doing their homework on climate change, never bothered to actually look at the climate data. If she did, she would have seen the warming in Alaska occurred in a two year period in the late 1970s when the Great Pacific Climate Shift (sudden shift of the PDO from its cold (-) to warm (+) phase) took place. The temperatures have been steady or falling ever since 1979, not continued to rise. The data below is from James Hansen's NASA GISS web site for Anchorage, Fairbanks and Nome Alaska (all urban areas). The trend in the last 30 years in those three major urban areas has been -0.2F.

Annual Average Temperature Fairbanks, Anchorage and Nome



Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

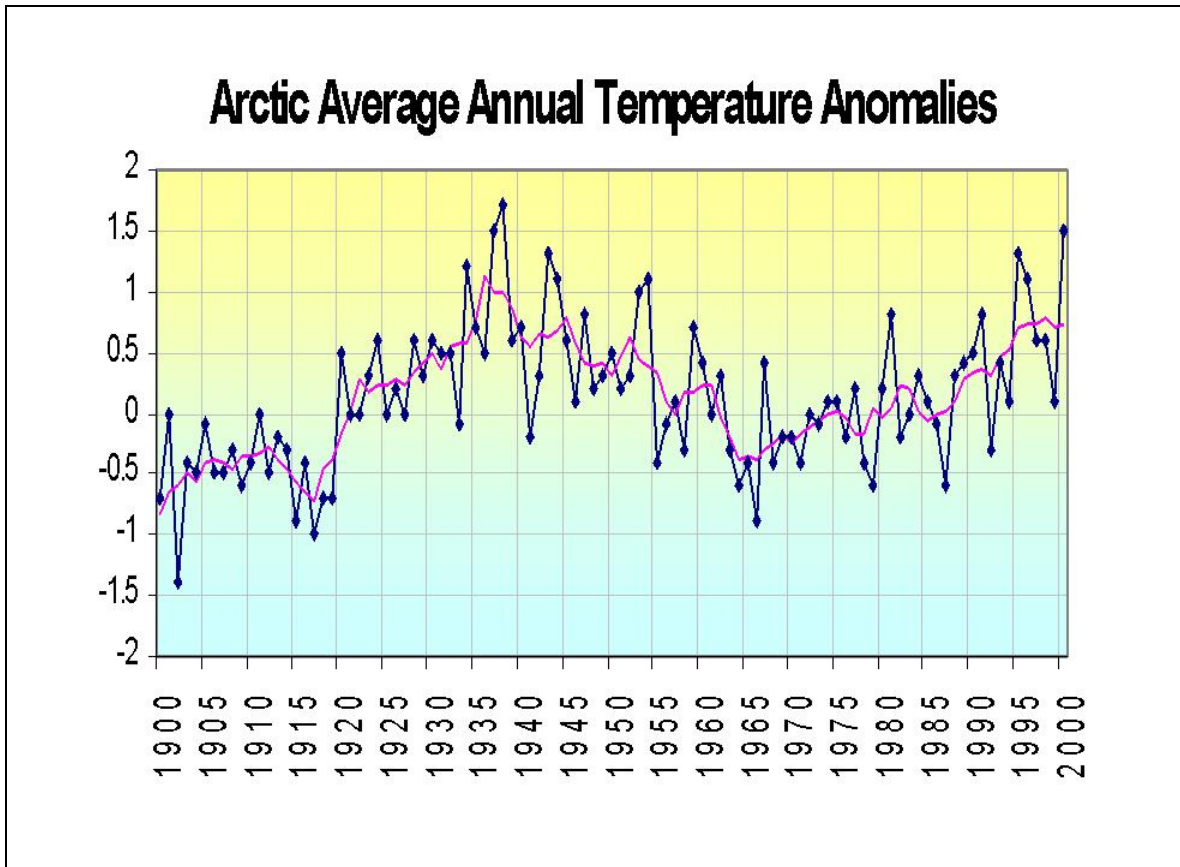


In the positive state of the PDO ocean temperatures are warm off the southern Alaska coast, when negative cold. Not surprisingly when a sudden shift from cold water to warm water occurred in the late 1970s, land temperatures responded suddenly up. Interestingly except for the discontinuity during the major shift, temperature trends in the two periods prior and after were down.

And if you look at the PDO graph, you may notice a downtrend has begun and in fact the PDO has been negative more in the last year and the water off the coast cold. Indeed March was the coldest March since the 1970s in Alaska. November in Fairbanks was the coldest November since the 1960s. But instead of talking about that, and doing their homework and telling Alaskans that if the PDO flips, colder weather is to come, they play the politically correct 'ignore the facts, believe the models' approach and talk only of warming.

As for the warming of the arctic shores and the arctic, had she read the entire IPCC 4th Assessment report she would have seen that a similar warming occurred in the 1930s and 1940s. A search into the literature would have shown that this warming now as then relates to the PDO and recently the warm Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (Polyakov and Dmitrenko). Further research would have shown the cycles have repeated

approximately every 70 years centuries. The Russians reported that cod fish were caught off Siberia in the mid 1800s. These changes are detailed in this [recent blog](#).



Also the town of Barrow on the arctic coast, whose population has grown to over 4800 actually has developed a mini-heat island with a warming, especially in winter of up to 3.4F over surrounding rural locations (Hinkel et al.2003).

Most people I know in the business of weather say TWC has become unwatchable. I sadly could not agree more. We can only hope the ratings for Forecast Earth are a 'disaster' and they smarten up and go back to covering the weather. After all they are not TDC (The Disaster Channel) but TWC (The Weather Channel). When I want documentaries I will flip to the Discovery or History Channels.