

## Global climate change poses complex challenges



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When we try to find answers to the questions revolving around the global climate

change issue, we find there aren't many. This has never happened before, at least not as a man-made phenomenon.

There were enormous changes when the ice ages came and went and spread glaciers over the continents over the past 50 million years. Nature was in

charge of things in those days. Now, we are in charge of nature. It's anybody's guess what the scale of changes will be if we don't move swiftly to halt the artificial warming of the earth's climate that we humans continue to bring on ourselves.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's scientists can only speculate about what would happen if the planet's sea level rose 1 inch or 1 foot, or if the average temperature rose by 1-10 degrees. The best of them can't agree on whether such things would make beaches disappear and take with them all the creatures that rely on them. Some say beaches would just reappear farther inland. Maybe warmer water would destroy all the coral reefs. Then again, maybe they'll just move to cooler water.

The bottom line is we don't know what could happen; we just know we mustn't let it happen without a fight. We can't be so heartless that we would hand off a completely distorted – perhaps even used up – planet to some future generation.

All of us contributed to the problem, and it's up to all of us to fix it. After all, our whole planet is what's at stake. It is time we ended our denial that we have a huge problem and begin to rise to the complex challenges that are upon us now.

We can start by recycling more and conserving fossil fuels. Turn off a few lights and do less driving.

Global climate change really is happening, and where it takes us is up to us. **FW**

*A mangrove tree stands in a dried area of the Everglades.*



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