

# Geologic Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere

AOSC / CHEM 433 & AOSC / CHEM 633

Ross Salawitch

Class Web Sites:

<http://www2.atmos.umd.edu/~rjs/class/fall2020>

<https://myelms.umd.edu/courses/1291919>



<https://www.videoblocks.com/video/earth-sunset-spacewalk-view-from-space-station-r7dydlcsgjd23vml0>

## Lecture 1 3 September 2020

# Announcements

1) New student introductions

2) AOSC Weekly Seminar Sept 3: 3:30 pm (today!)

## DR. MORGAN O'NEILL

INSTITUTION: EARTH SYSTEM SCIENCE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

TITLE: FUJITA'S "JUMPING CIRRUS:" HYDRAULIC JUMP DYNAMICS ABOVE SUPERCELL THUNDERSTORMS

**Abstract:** The strongest supercell thunderstorms typically feature an Above-Anvil Cirrus Plume (AACP), which is a wake of ice and water vapor downstream of overshooting deep convection, several km above the large anvil shield. Thunderstorms are known to be an important source of water vapor to the lower stratosphere, with substantial implication for climate. Previous work has shown that the occurrence of the AACP is coincident with strong evidence of breaking gravity waves, but a more detailed study of its dynamics and lifecycle has not been undertaken. Using 50-m isotropic large eddy simulations, we show that the overshooting top of a supercell acts as a topographic obstacle and drives a hydraulic jump downstream. Stratospheric air that crests the effective topography plummets smoothly down the lee side at speeds exceeding 100 m/s and then quickly transitions to highly turbulent in a rapidly-evolving hydraulic jump. This jump injects water vapor and ice into the lower stratosphere irreversibly, several kilometers above the top of the anvil cloud, forming a distinct, realistic AACP. We provide the first study of a large-scale hydraulic jump in the absence of solid topography.



Morgan received her B.S. in Physics at the University of New Hampshire in 2009 and her Ph.D. in Atmospheric Sciences at MIT in 2015 working with Dr. Kerry Emanuel. She was a Koshland Prize Postdoctoral Fellow at the Weizmann Institute of Science and then a T. C. Chamberlin Fellow at the University of Chicago before joining the Earth System Science faculty at Stanford in 2018. She is also currently a Center Fellow, by courtesy, of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, and a Gabilan Faculty Fellow.

Zoom Link: <https://umd.zoom.us/j/94562248135?pwd=TEIyVS9TY0ZTSTZZNU01L0F1eTdTZz09>

# Announcements

- 1) New student introductions
- 2) AOSC Weekly Seminar Mar 3: 3:30 pm
- 3) Re-load button needed for viewing peer-reviewed literature from off campus:  
<https://lib.guides.umd.edu/reload-button>

Date	Lecture Topic	Required Reading	Admis. Tickets	Lecture Notes	Problem Sets*	Additional Readings	Learning Outcome
09/01	Class Overview	No reading for first meeting	No AT	<a href="#">Lecture 0 2020 Zoom Video</a>			No Quiz
09/03	Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere	<a href="#">Paris Beacon of Hope</a> Sec 1.1, 1.2 (intro), and 1.2.1 (11.5 pages)	<a href="#">AT 1</a>	<a href="#">Lecture 1 2020 Zoom Video</a>		<a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/day-the-dinosaurs-died">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/day-the-dinosaurs-died</a> <a href="#">Ivany and Salawitch, Geology, 1993</a>	<a href="#">Quiz 1</a>
09/08	Overview of Global Warming, Air Quality, & Ozone Depletion	<a href="#">IPCC 2007 FAQ</a> (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, & 3.1) (11 pages) <a href="#">EPA AQI Brochure</a> (11 pages) <a href="#">20 QAs Ozone (Q1, 2, 7, &amp; 14)</a> (11 pages) <a href="#">Paris Beacon of Hope</a> Sec 1.2.2 (3 pages)	<a href="#">AT 2</a>	<a href="#">Lecture 2 2020 Zoom Video</a>		<a href="#">Kerr, Science, 2007 *</a> <a href="#">Bell et al., EHP, 2006 *</a> <a href="#">Montzka et al., Nature, 2018</a> <a href="#">Naming Convention for CFCs &amp; Halons</a> <a href="#">Entire IPCC 2007 FAQ</a> <a href="#">Entire 20 QAs Ozone</a> <a href="#">Movie Clip</a>	Quiz 2

# Announcements

- 1) New student introductions
- 2) AOSC Weekly Seminar Mar 3: 3:30 pm
- 3) Re-load button needed for viewing peer-reviewed literature from off campus:  
<https://lib.guides.umd.edu/reload-button>
- 4) Anyone else?

# Announcements

Today's lecture:



Next Tuesday:



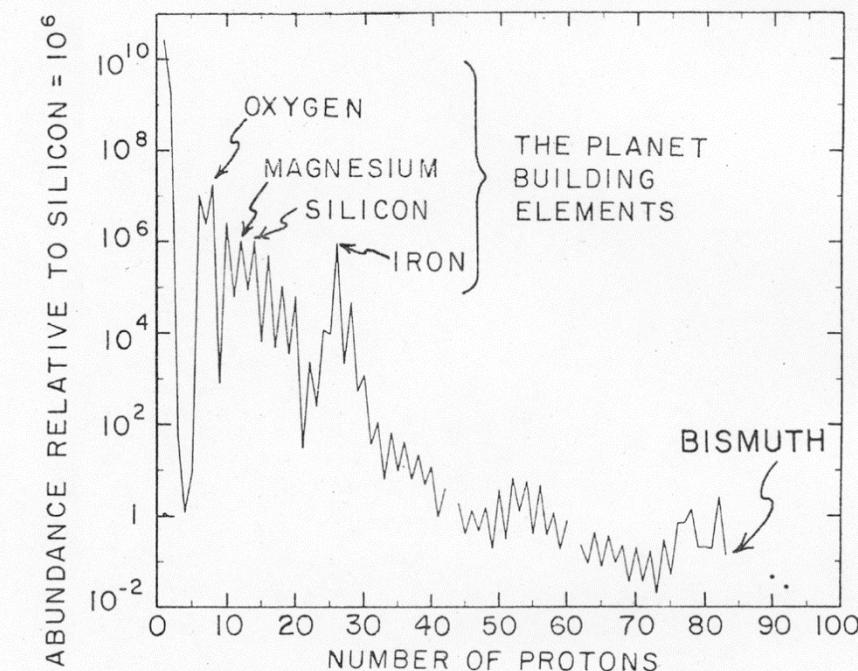
# Announcements

Next Thursday:



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *“In the Beginning”*

- Assemblage of 92 natural elements
- Elemental composition of Earth basically unchanged over 4.5 Gyr
  - Gravitational escape restricted to a few gases (H, He)
  - Extra-terrestrial inputs (comets, meteorites) relatively unimportant
- Biogeochemical cycling of elements between reservoirs of Earth “system” determines atmospheric composition

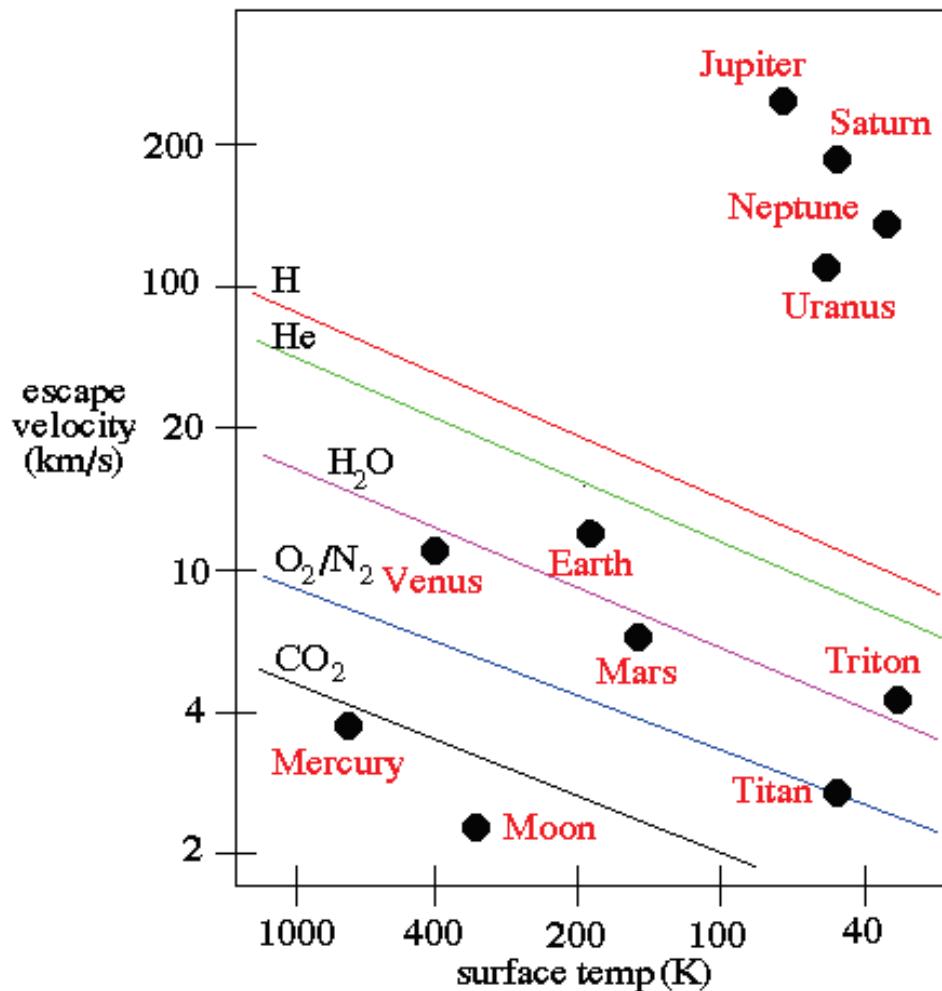


From “How to Build a Habitable Planet”  
By W.S. Broecker, ELDIGIO Press, pg 57

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Earth, Mars, and Venus*

	Earth	Venus	Mars
Radius (km)	6400	6100	3400
Mass ( $10^{24}$ kg)	6.0	4.9	0.6
Albedo	0.3	0.8	0.22
Distance from Sun (A.U.)	1	0.72	1.52
Surface Pressure (atm)	1	91	0.007
Surface Temperature (K)	$\sim 15$ °C	$\sim 460$ °C	-140 °C to 20 °C
N <sub>2</sub> (mol/mol)	0.78	$3.4 \times 10^{-2}$	$2.7 \times 10^{-2}$
O <sub>2</sub> (mol/mol)	0.21	$6.9 \times 10^{-5}$	$1.3 \times 10^{-3}$
CO <sub>2</sub> (mol/mol)	$3.7 \times 10^{-4}$	0.96	0.95
H <sub>2</sub> O (mol/mol)	$1 \times 10^{-2}$	$3 \times 10^{-3}$	$3 \times 10^{-4}$
SO <sub>2</sub> (mol/mol)	$1 \times 10^{-9}$	$1.5 \times 10^{-4}$	Nil
Cloud Composition	H <sub>2</sub> O	H <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	Mineral Dust

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Earth, Mars, and Venus*



<http://abyss.uoregon.edu/~js/ast121/lectures/lec14.html>

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere:

*Earth is of course the water planet*

*The source of Earth's water has been unclear*

A new study finds that Earth's water may have come from materials that were present in the inner solar system at the time the planet formed – instead of far-reaching comets or asteroids delivering such water. The findings published 28 Aug 2020 in Science suggest that Earth may have always been wet.

“Our discovery shows that the Earth’s building blocks might have significantly contributed to the Earth’s water,” said lead author Laurette Piani. “Hydrogen-bearing material was present in the inner solar system at the time of the rocky planet formation, even though the temperatures were too high for water to condense.”

The findings from this study are surprising because the Earth’s building blocks are often presumed to be dry. They come from inner zones of the solar system where temperatures would have been too high for water to condense and come together with other solids during planet formation.

Enstatite chondrites have similar oxygen, titanium and calcium isotopes as Earth, and this study showed that their hydrogen and nitrogen isotopes are similar to Earth’s, too. In the study of extraterrestrial materials, the abundances of an element’s isotopes are used as a distinctive signature to identify where that element originated.

Press release: <https://source.wustl.edu/2020/08/meteorite-study-suggests-earth-may-have-always-been-wet>  
Paper: <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6507/1110>

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Elon Musk and Mars*

SEPTEMBER 1ST 20\_\_VICTOR TANGERMAN\_\_FILED UNDER: OFF WORLD

## **Almost Inhabitable**

---

During Monday's virtual Humans to Mars summit, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk elaborated on his grand ambitions of building a self-sustaining city on Mars by the year 2050 — and the potential dangers settlers will face in the construction of such an extraplanetary civilization.

"Getting to Mars, I think, is not the fundamental issue," he said during the event, as quoted by CNBC. "The fundamental issue is building a base, building a city on Mars that is self-sustaining."

"I want to emphasize, this is a very hard and dangerous and difficult thing," he added. "Not for the faint of heart. Good chance you'll die. And it's going to be tough, tough going, but it'll be pretty glorious if it works out."



<https://futurism.com/the-byte/elon-musk-die-on-mars-city-starship>

# The Martian



01:11:33

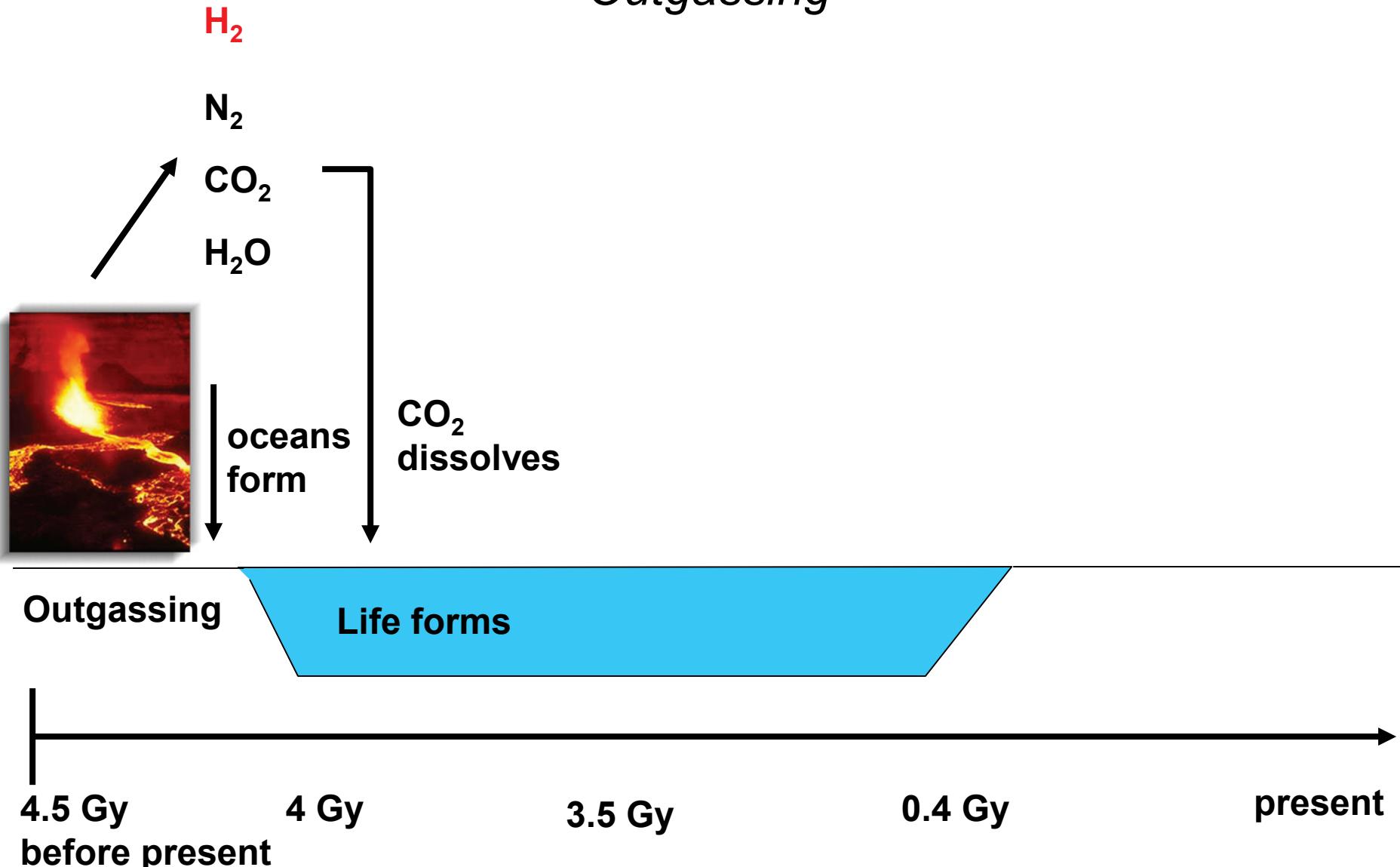
02:21:32



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Earth, Mars, and Venus*



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Outgassing*



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Reducing Environment*

Decreasing oxidation number (reduction reactions)



-3	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
$\text{NH}_3$ Ammonia	$\text{N}_2$	$\text{N}_2\text{O}$ Nitrous oxide	$\text{NO}$ Nitric oxide	$\text{HONO}$ Nitrous acid	$\text{NO}_2$ Nitrogen dioxide	$\text{HNO}_3$ Nitric acid $\text{NO}_3^-$ Nitrate



Increasing oxidation number (oxidation reactions)

Oxidation state represents number of electrons:  
added to an element (- oxidation state) or  
removed from an element (+ oxidation state)

Oxidation state of a compound:  $\sum = -2 \times \# \text{ O atoms} + 1 \times \# \text{ H atoms};$   
Oxidation of element = Electrical Charge -  $\sum$

Note: there are some exceptions to this rule, such as oxygen in peroxides

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Reducing Environment*

Decreasing oxidation number (reduction reactions)



-4	0	+2	+4
$\text{CH}_4$ Methane	$\text{CH}_2\text{O}$ Formaldehyde	$\text{CO}$ Carbon Monoxide	$\text{CO}_2$ Carbon dioxide



Increasing oxidation number (oxidation reactions)

Oxidation state represents number of electrons:  
added to an element (– oxidation state) or  
removed from an element (+ oxidation state)

Oxidation state of a compound:  $\sum = -2 \times \# \text{ O atoms} + 1 \times \# \text{ H atoms};$   
Oxidation of element = Electrical Charge –  $\sum$

Note: there are some exceptions to this rule, such as oxygen in peroxides

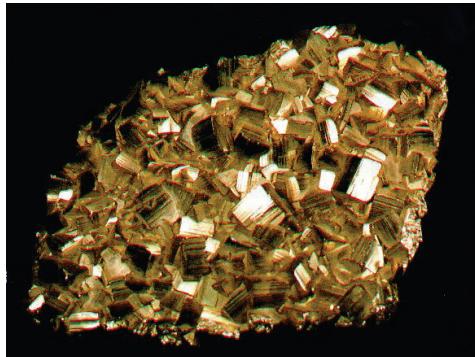
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Reducing Environment*

**How do we know early atmosphere was reducing ?**

**Why was a reducing environment  
important ?**

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Reducing Environment*

**How do we know early atmosphere was reducing ?**

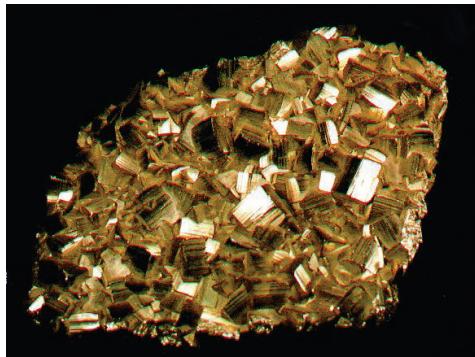


Minerals such as pyrite (iron sulfide), or “fools gold”, are unstable in oxidizing environments and are found only in early deposits

**Why was a reducing environment  
important ?**

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Reducing Environment*

## How do we know early atmosphere was reducing ?

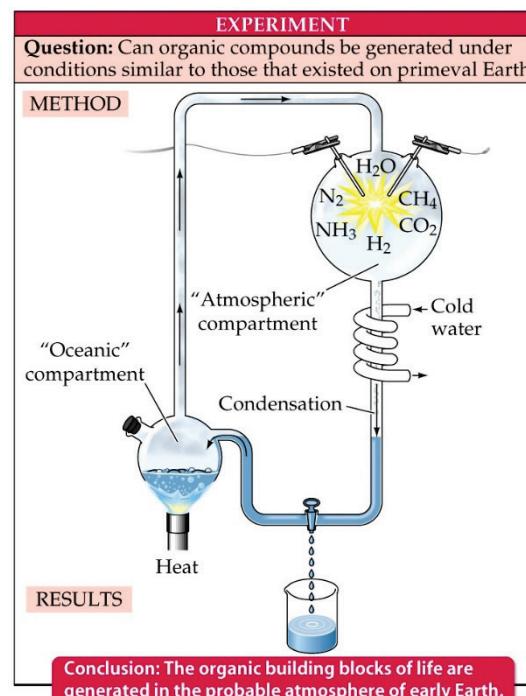


Minerals such as pyrite (iron sulfide), or “fools gold”, are unstable in oxidizing environments and are found only in early deposits

## Why was a reducing environment important ?

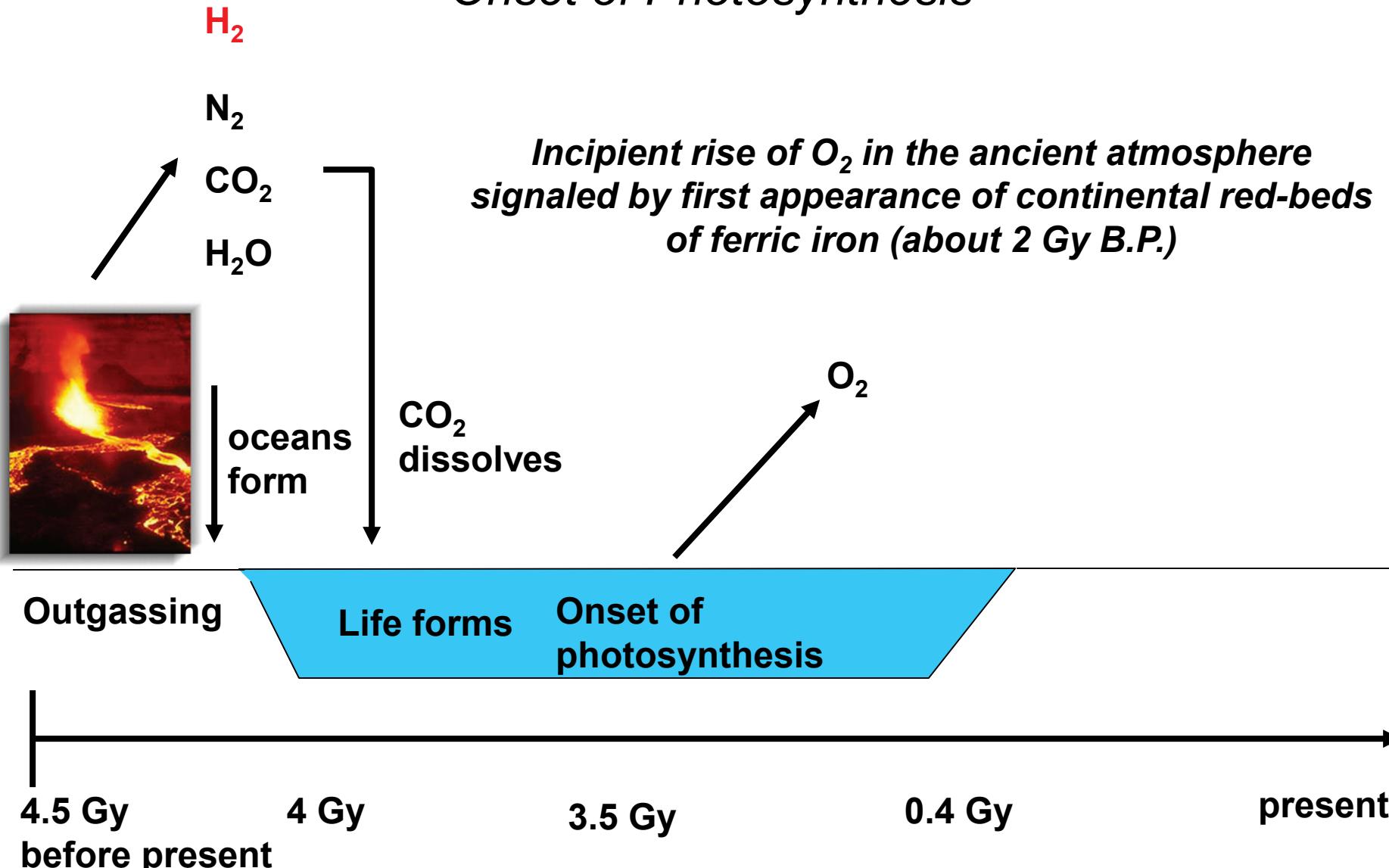
Organic molecules produced from sparking a mixture of  $\text{CH}_4$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and  $\text{H}_2$ :

Miller & Urey, “Organic compound synthesis on early Earth”, Science, 1959



© 2001 Sinauer Associates, Inc.

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Onset of Photosynthesis*



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

- Rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> linked to evolution of life:

The rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> that occurred ~2.4 billion years ago was the greatest environmental crisis the Earth has endured. [O<sub>2</sub>] rose from one part in a million to one part in five: from 0.00001 to 21% ! Earth's original biosphere was like an alien planet. Photosynthetic bacteria, frantic for hydrogen, discovered water and its use led to the build up of atomic O, a toxic waste product.

Many kinds of microbes were wiped out. O and light together were lethal. The resulting O-rich environment tested the ingenuity of microbes, especially those non-mobile microorganisms unable to escape the newly abundant reactive atmospheric gas. The microbes that survived invented various intracellular mechanisms to protect themselves from and eventually exploit this most dangerous pollutant.

Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, **Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution**, 1986

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

- Rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> linked to evolution of life:

The rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> that occurred ~2.4 billion years ago was the greatest environmental crisis the Earth has endured. [O<sub>2</sub>] rose from one part in a million to one part in five: from 0.00001 to 21% ! Earth's original biosphere was like an alien planet. Photosynthetic bacteria, frantic for hydrogen, discovered water and its use led to the build up of atomic O, a toxic waste product.

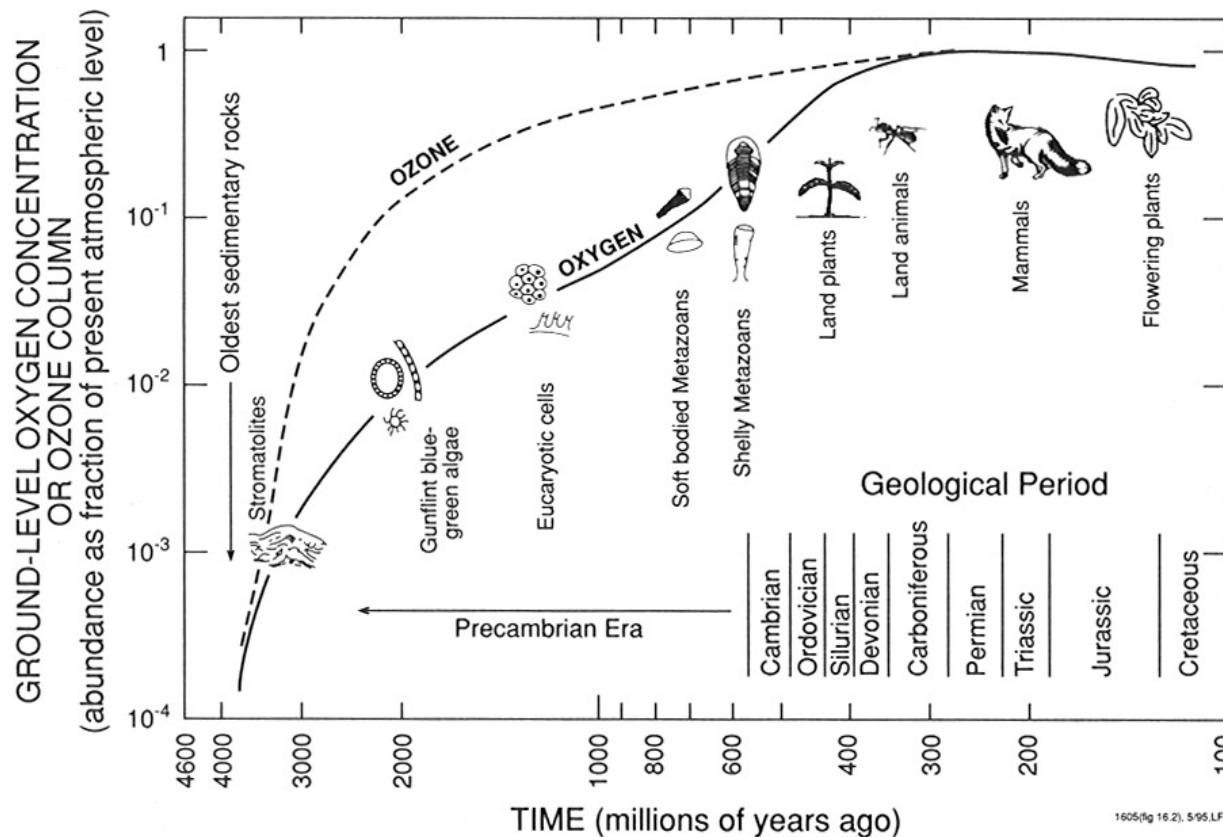
Many kinds of microbes were wiped out. O and light together were lethal. The resulting O-rich environment tested the ingenuity of microbes, especially those non-mobile microorganisms unable to escape the newly abundant reactive atmospheric gas. The microbes that survived invented various intracellular mechanisms to protect themselves from and eventually exploit this most dangerous pollutant.

Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, **Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution**, 1986

The rise of atmospheric oxygen led to something else critical to “life as we know it” – what did rising [O<sub>2</sub>] lead to ?!?

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

- Rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> linked to evolution of life:



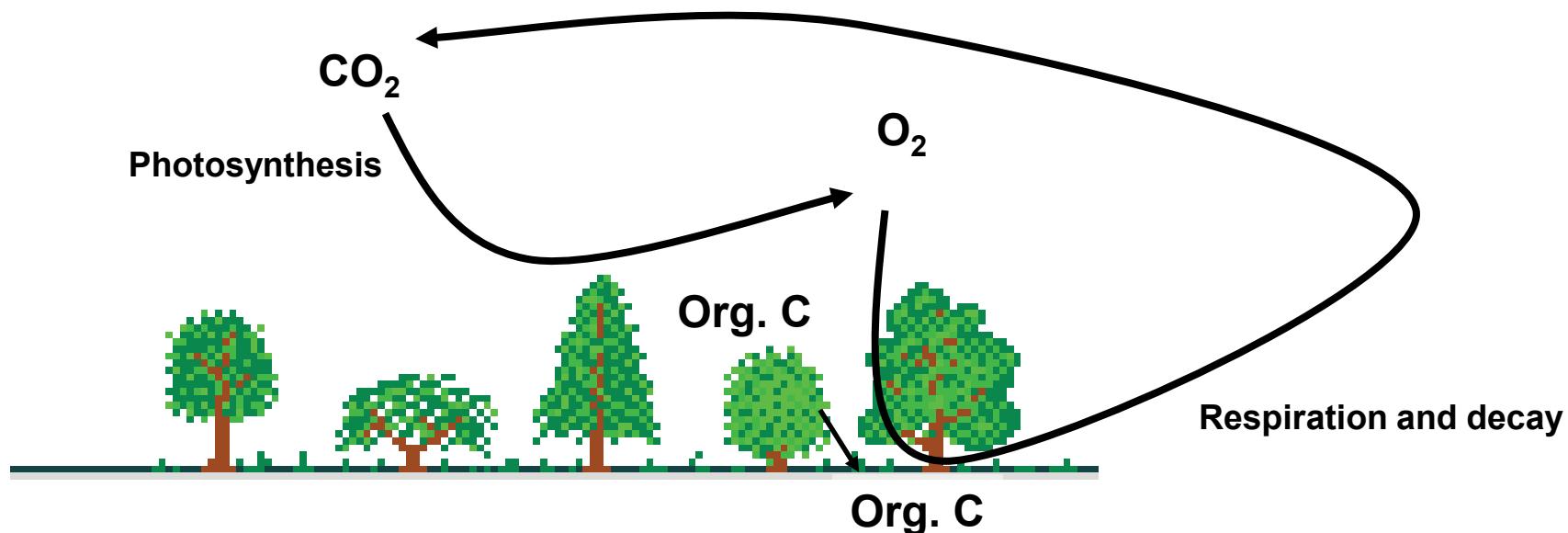
**Figure 16.3.** Probable evolution of the oxygen and ozone abundance in the atmosphere (fraction of present levels) during the different geological periods of the Earth's history (Wayne, 1991; reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press).

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Photosynthesis: Source of O<sub>2</sub>

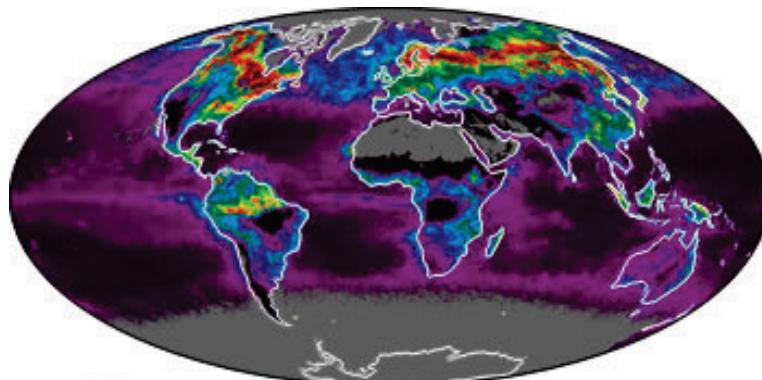


- Respiration and Decay: Sink of O<sub>2</sub>



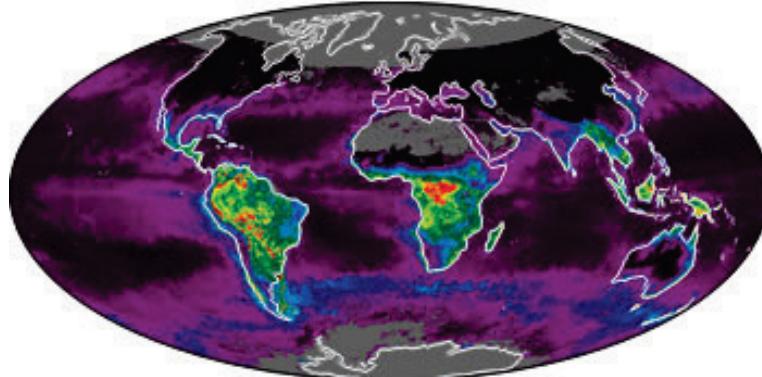
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Net primary productivity of organic matter:



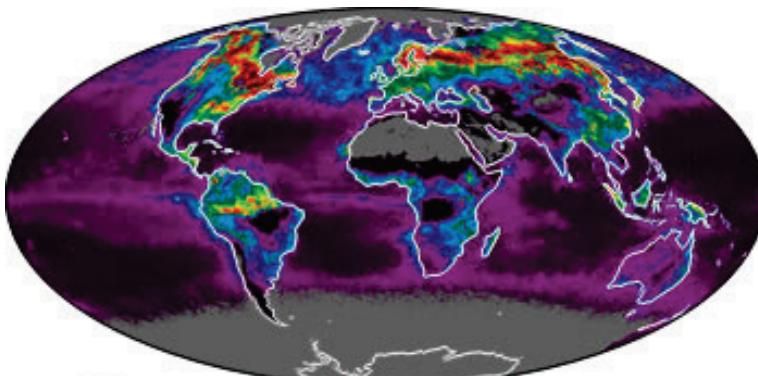
Imhoff et al., *Nature*, 2004

<http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/science/figures/FIGURE9.htm>



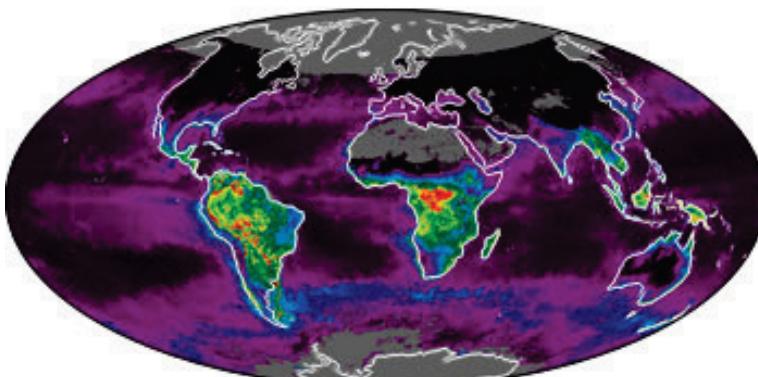
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Net primary productivity of organic matter:



June 2002

Imhoff et al., *Nature*, 2004



December 2002

<http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/science/figures/FIGURE9.htm>



Global net primary productivity (NPP) based on space-based measurements obtained by the NASA MODIS satellite instrument.

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Net primary productivity of organic matter:

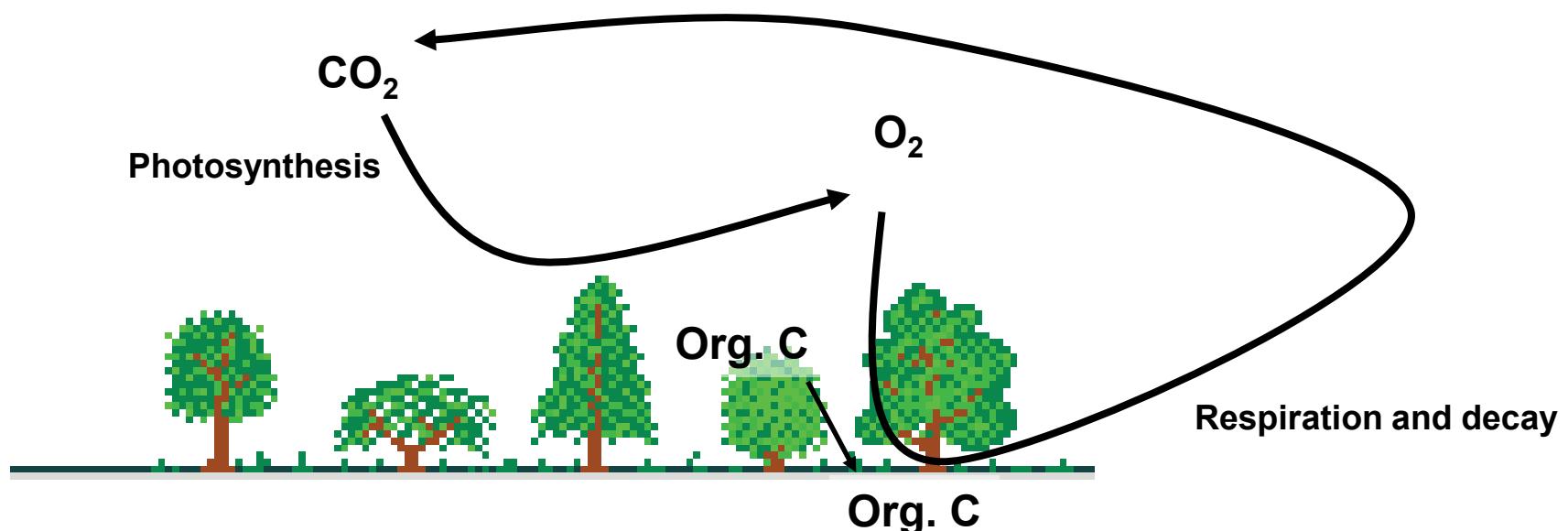


Production of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  is therefore  $\sim 152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$

**Note:  $152 = 57 \times (32) / (12)$**

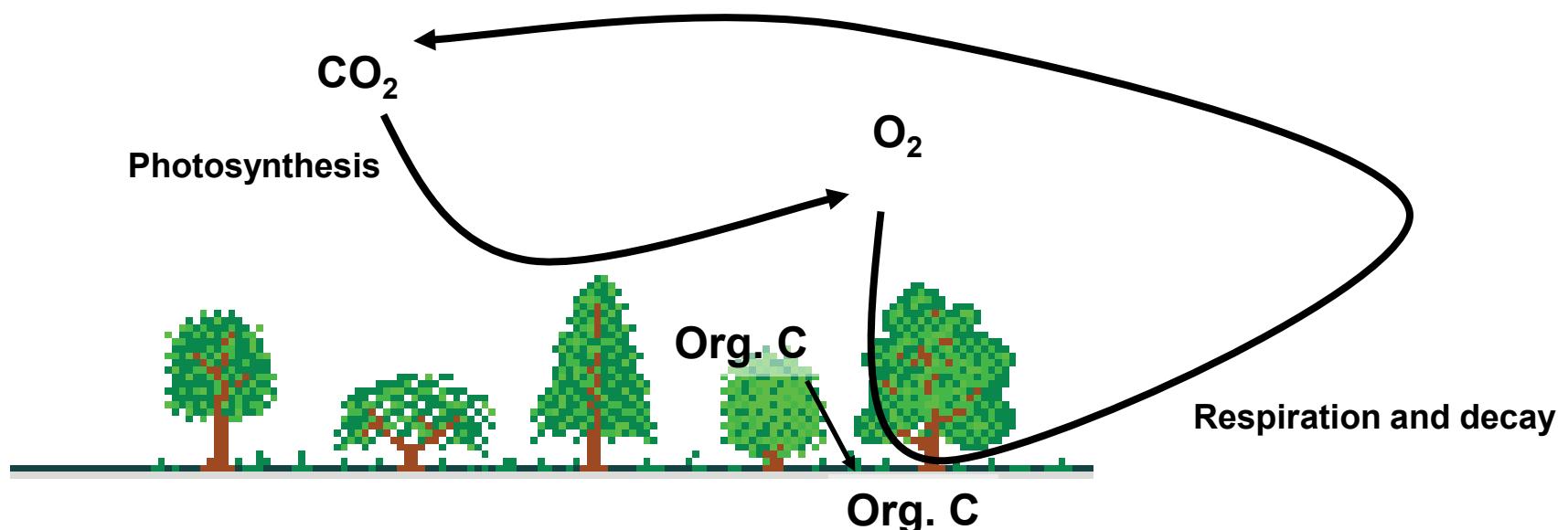
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Net primary productivity of organic matter:  
$$6 \text{ CO}_2 + 6 \text{ H}_2\text{O} + h\nu \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + 6 \text{ O}_2$$
 is  $\sim 57 \times 10^{15} \text{ g C yr}^{-1}$   
Production of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  is therefore  $\sim 152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$
- Mass  $\text{O}_2$  in atmosphere =  $0.21 \times (5.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}) \times (32 / 28.8) \approx 1.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}$



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

- Net primary productivity of organic matter:  
$$6 \text{ CO}_2 + 6 \text{ H}_2\text{O} + h\nu \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + 6 \text{ O}_2$$
 is  $\sim 57 \times 10^{15} \text{ g C yr}^{-1}$   
Production of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  is therefore  $\sim 152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$
- Mass  $\text{O}_2$  in atmosphere =  $0.21 \times (5.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}) \times (32 / 28.8) \approx 1.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}$
- Lifetime of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  due to biology = Amount / Flux



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

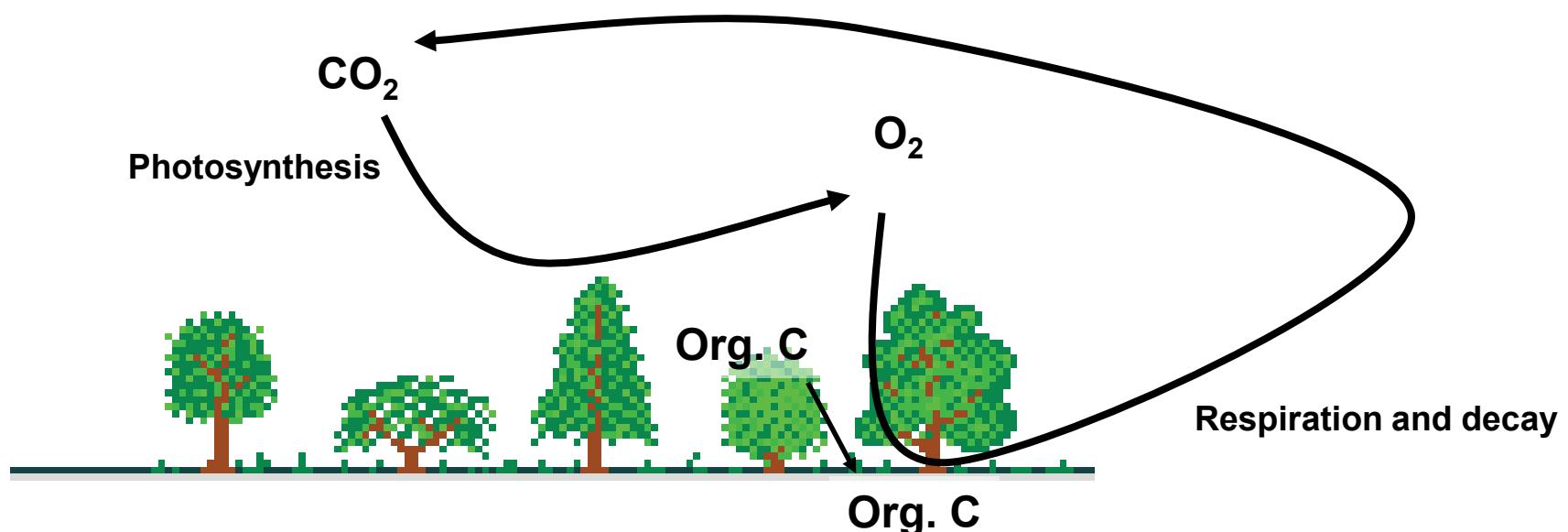
- Net primary productivity of organic matter:



Production of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  is therefore  $\sim 152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  Flux

- Mass  $\text{O}_2$  in atmosphere =  $0.21 \times (5.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}) \times (32 / 28.8) \approx 1.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}$  Amount

- Lifetime of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  due to biology = Amount / Flux



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Early Atmosphere: Photosynthesis*

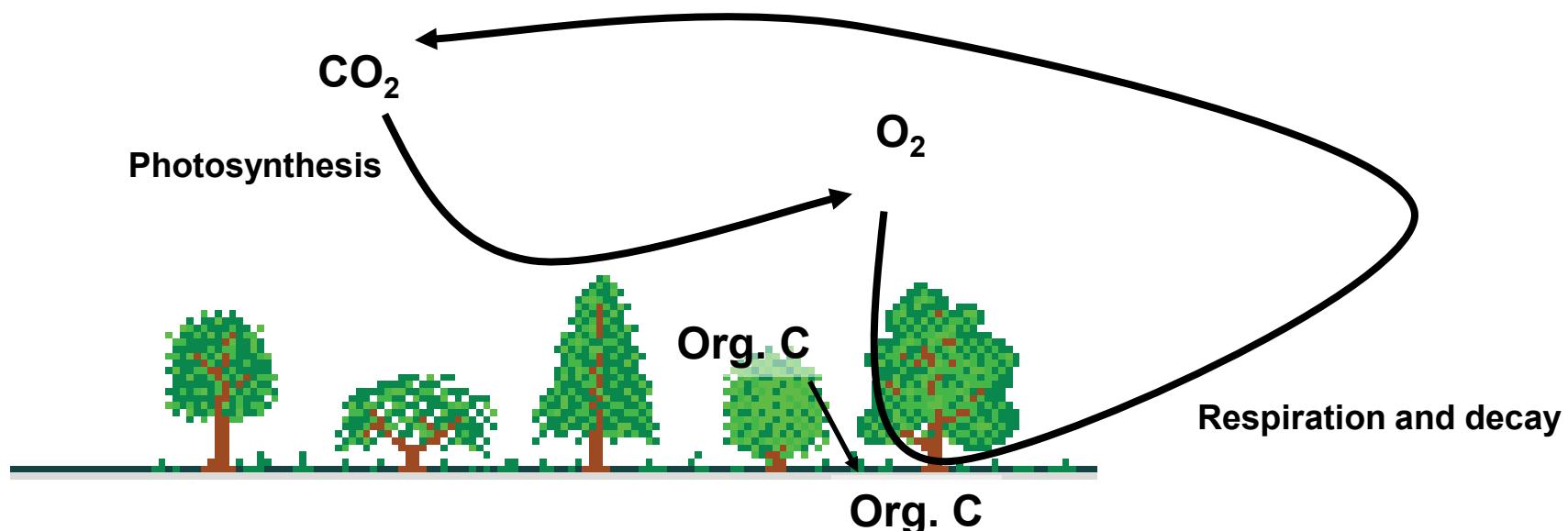
- Net primary productivity of organic matter:



Production of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  is therefore  $\sim 152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  Flux

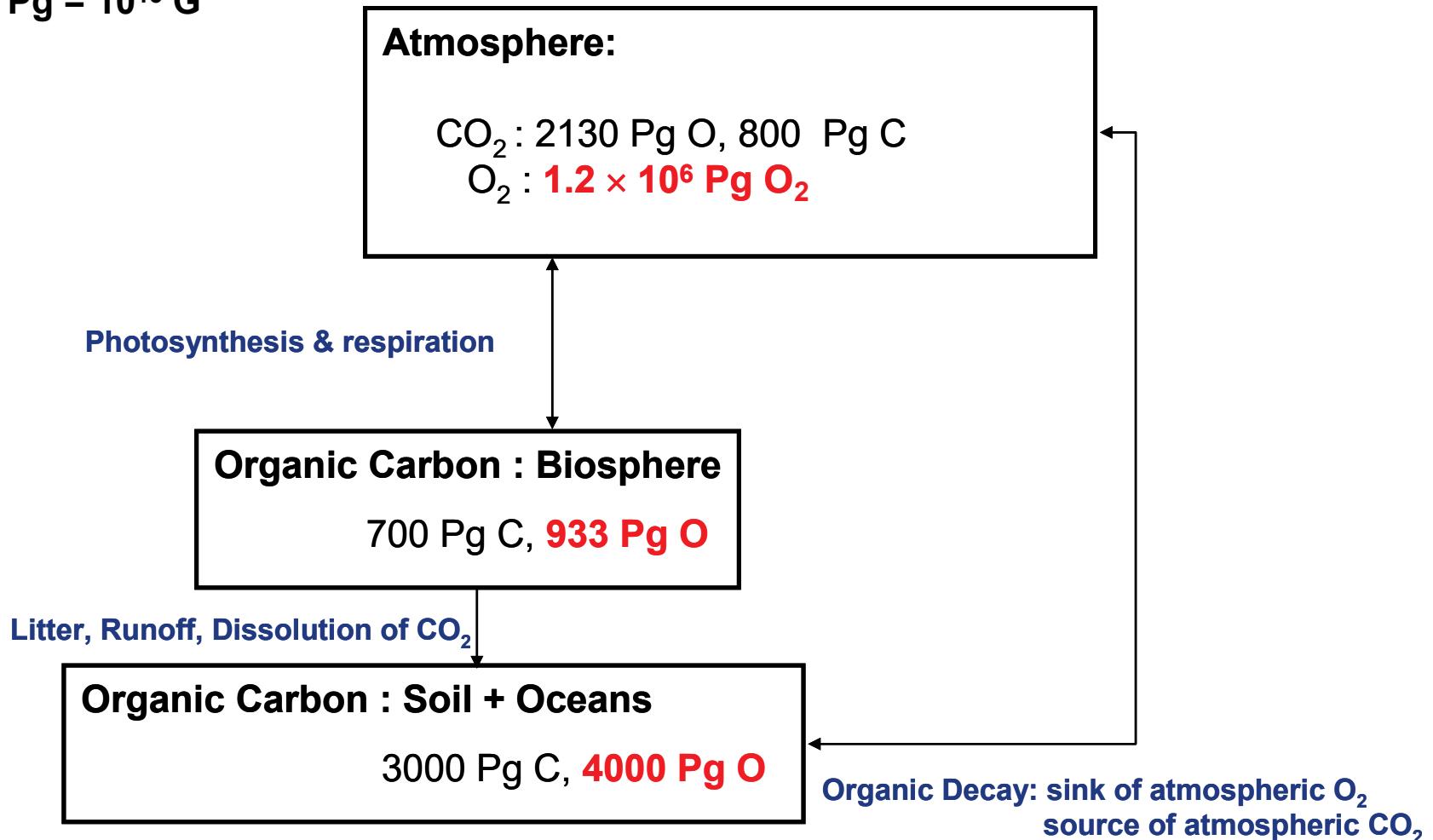
- Mass  $\text{O}_2$  in atmosphere =  $0.21 \times (5.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}) \times (32 / 28.8) \approx 1.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g}$  Amount

- Lifetime of atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  due to biology =  $1.2 \times 10^{21} \text{ g} / (152 \times 10^{15} \text{ g O}_2 \text{ yr}^{-1}) \approx 8,000 \text{ yr}$



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: Oxygen and Carbon Reservoirs

1 Pg =  $10^{15}$  G



Atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$  reservoir much larger than  $\text{O}_2$  content of biosphere, soils, and ocean; therefore, some other process must control atmospheric  $\text{O}_2$

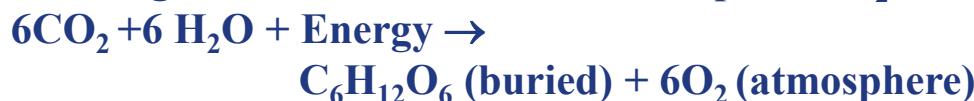
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: Oxygen Reservoirs & Pathways

1 Pg =  $10^{15}$  G

**Atmosphere:**

$O_2 : 1.2 \times 10^6 \text{ Pg } O_2$

Burial of organic matter is source of atmospheric  $O_2$ :



$O_2$  Lifetime  $\approx 4$  million years

**Sediments: Buried Organic Carbon**

$O_2 : \sim 32 \times 10^6 \text{ Pg } O$

Weathering of mantle is sink of atmospheric  $O_2$ :

For example:



**Crust and Mantle: Oxides of Fe, Si, S, Mg, etc:**  
 $FeO, Fe_2O_3, FeSiO_3, SiO_4, MgO, \text{ etc}$

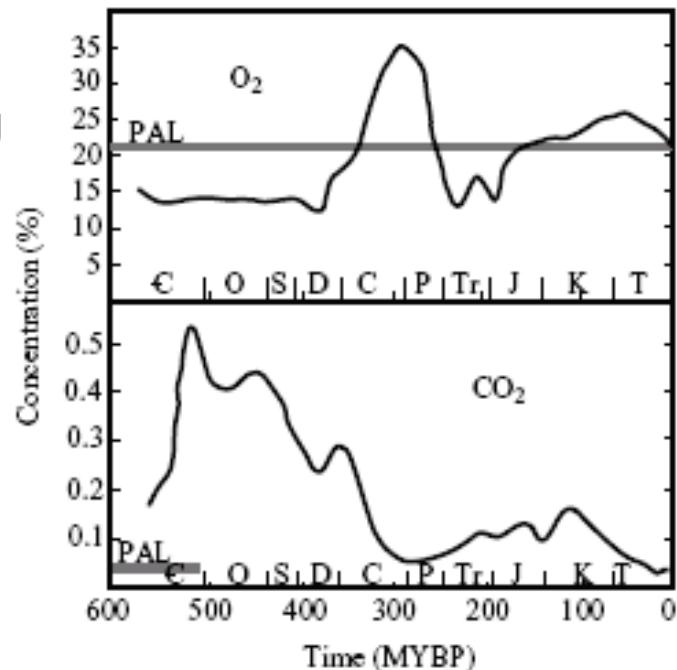
**This is where the bulk of the oxygen resides!**

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

- Rise of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> linked to evolution of life:
  - 400 My B.P. O<sub>2</sub> high enough to form an ozone layer
  - 400 to 300 My B.P.: first air breathing lung fish & primitive amphibians
- On geological timescales, level of O<sub>2</sub> represents balance between burial of organic C & weathering of sedimentary material:

(see Chapter 12, "Evolution of the Atmosphere" in *Chemistry of the Natural Atmosphere* by P. Warneck (2nd ed) for an excellent discussion)
- Present atmosphere is oxidizing:

$\text{CH}_4 \Rightarrow \text{CO}_2$  with time scale of ~9 years



From R. Dudley, Atmospheric O<sub>2</sub>, Giant Paleozoic Insects, and the Evolution of Aerial Locomotor Performance, *J. Exper. Biol.*, 201, 1043, 1998.

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

~500 to 300 My B.P.

- Development of vascular land plants
- Plants became bigger and bigger and less reliant on water
- Once buried, lignin in woody material resists decay
- Burial rate of terrestrial plant matter increases dramatically:  
(evidence :  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  analysis)
- Past burial rate of vascular plant material may have been much higher than present, due to the lack (way back when) of abundant bacteria, fungi, and small soil animals that now recycle plant matter

Non-vascular: Bryophytes

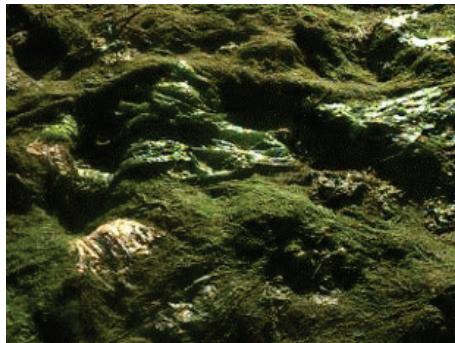
Vascular: Pteridophytes

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

~500 to 300 My B.P.

- Development of vascular land plants
- Plants became bigger and bigger and less reliant on water
- Once buried, lignin in woody material resists decay
- Burial rate of terrestrial plant matter increases dramatically:  
(evidence :  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  analysis)
- Past burial rate of vascular plant material may have been much higher than present, due to the lack (way back when) of abundant bacteria, fungi, and small soil animals that now recycle plant matter

Non-vascular: Bryophytes (moss)



Vascular: Pteridophytes

The first land plants were algae, which made a difficult transition from their water origins to root on rocky surfaces. The green algae pictured here on top of coastal mudflats would have been a common view of Earth's first land plants.

<http://www.ecology.com/feature-stories/quiet-evolution-of-trees/index.html>

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

~500 to 300 My B.P.

- Development of vascular land plants
- Plants became bigger and bigger and less reliant on water
- Once buried, lignin in woody material resists decay
- Burial rate of terrestrial plant matter increases dramatically:  
(evidence :  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  analysis)
- Past burial rate of vascular plant material may have been much higher than present, due to the lack (way back when) of abundant bacteria, fungi, and small soil animals that now recycle plant matter

Non-vascular: Bryophytes (moss)



Vascular: Pteridophytes (ferns)



The first land plants were algae, which made a difficult transition from their water origins to root on rocky surfaces. The green algae pictured here on top of coastal mudflats would have been a common view of Earth's first land plants.

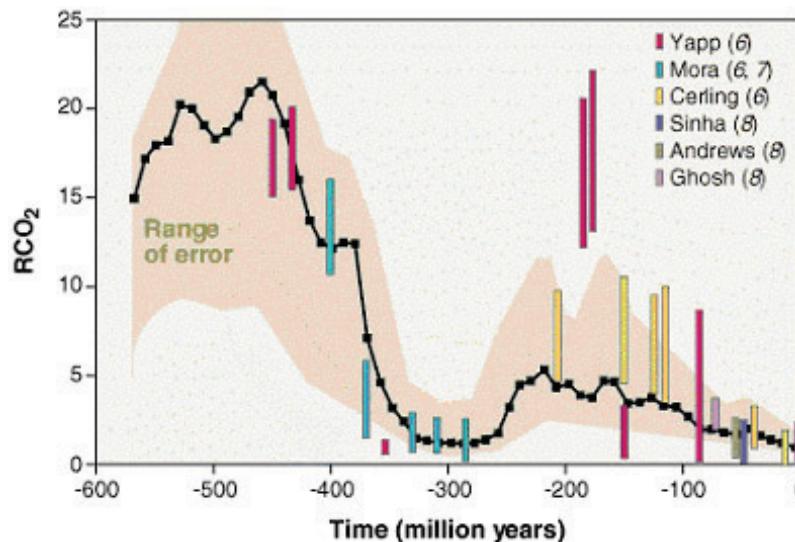
<http://www.ecology.com/feature-stories/quiet-evolution-of-trees/index.html>

The first trees did not appear until only ~370 million years ago!

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> on Geological Time Scales*

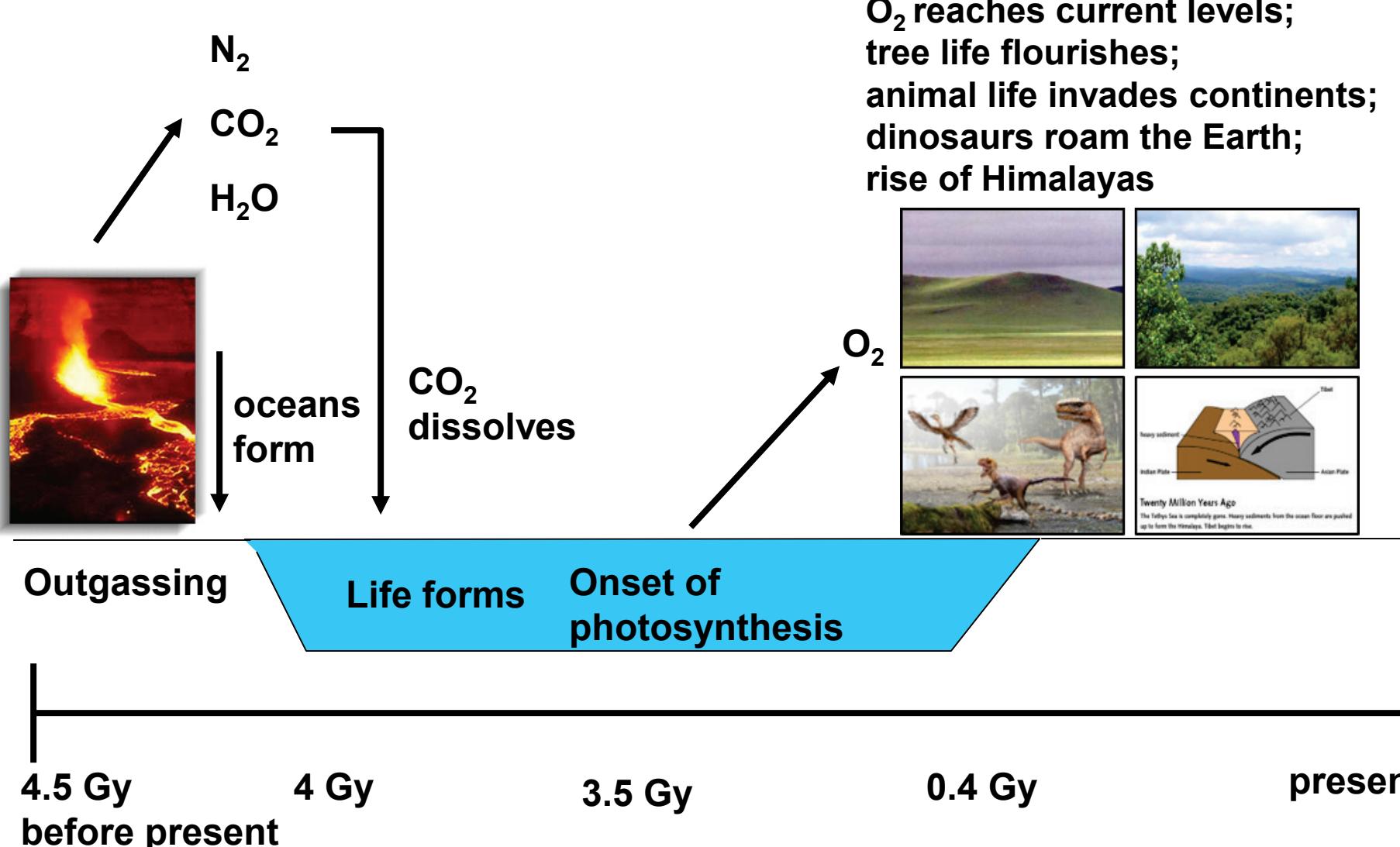
~500 to 300 My B.P.

- Development of vascular land plants
- Plants became bigger and bigger and less reliant on water
- Once buried, lignin in woody material resists decay
- Burial rate of terrestrial plant matter increases dramatically:  
(evidence :  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  analysis)
- Past burial rate of vascular plant material may have been much higher than present, due to the lack (way back when) of abundant bacteria, fungi, and small soil animals that now recycle plant matter



From R. Berner, *Science*, 276, 544, 1997.

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Precursors of Modern Day World*



# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: CO<sub>2</sub> and Temperature

What message were we trying to convey?

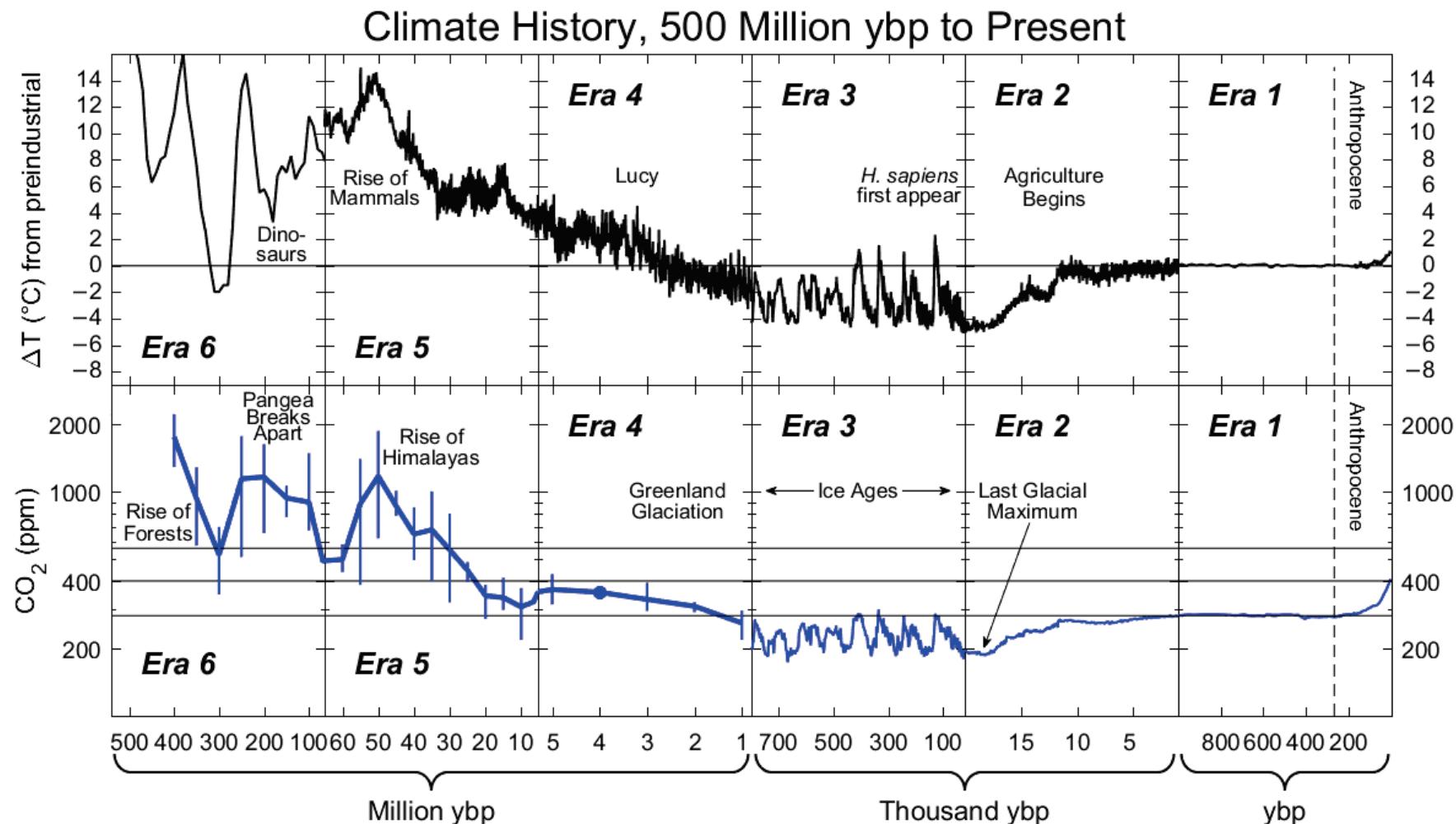
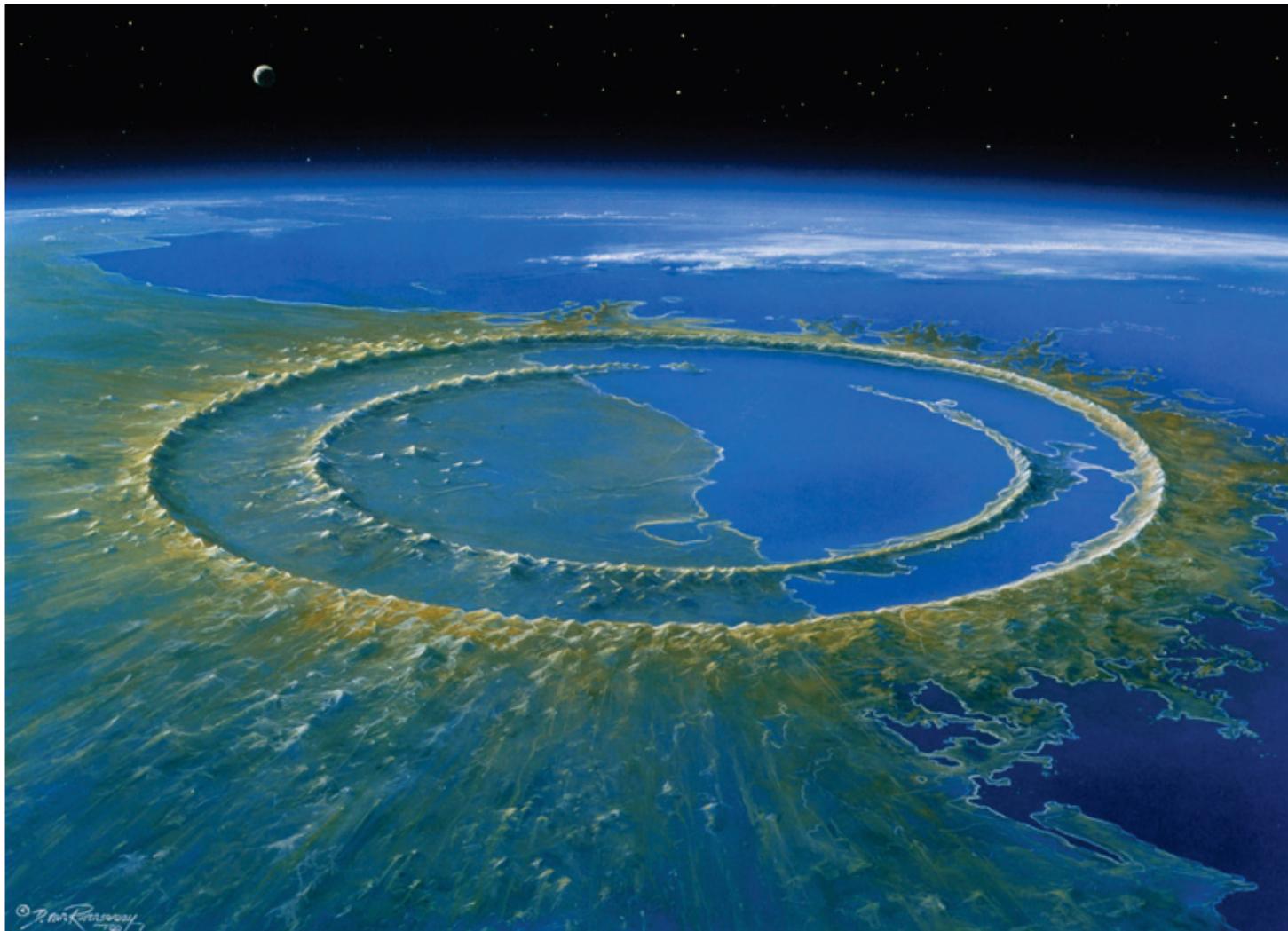


Fig 1.1, Paris Beacon of Hope

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: One Day, *Everything Changed*



An artist's impression of what the Chicxulub crater might have looked like soon after an asteroid struck the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. Researchers studied the peak rings, or circular hills, inside the crater. Detlev van Ravenswaay/Science Source

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/science/chicxulub-crater-dinosaur-extinction.html>

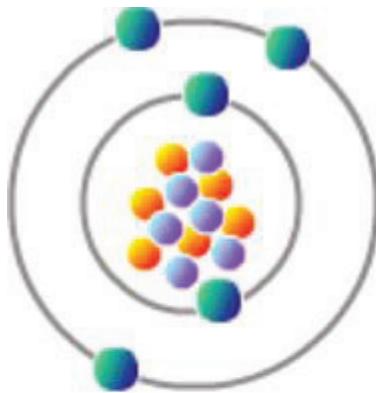
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: One Day, *Everything Changed*



<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/day-the-dinosaurs-died>  
We'll look at 36:50 to 38:50

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: One Day, *Everything Changed*

**Biology prefers light forms of carbon:**

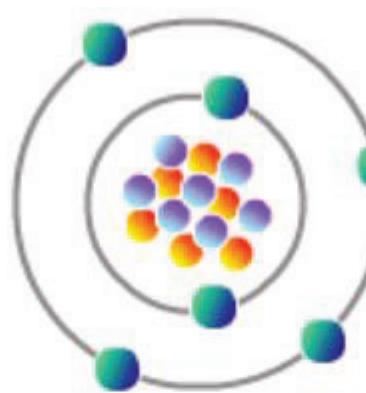


**Carbon**

- 6 Protons
- 6 Neutrons

**Nuclear number**

$$\begin{aligned} &= 6 + 6 \\ &= \mathbf{12} \end{aligned}$$

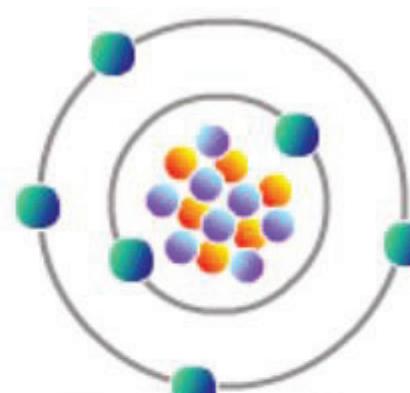


**Carbon-13**

- 6 Protons
- 7 Neutrons

**Nuclear number**

$$\begin{aligned} &= 6 + 7 \\ &= \mathbf{13} \end{aligned}$$



**Carbon-14**

- 6 Protons
- 8 Neutrons

**Nuclear number**

$$\begin{aligned} &= 6 + 8 \\ &= \mathbf{14} \end{aligned}$$

<https://experiment.com/u/iA41fA>

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: One Day, *Everything Changed*

*By understanding how the carbon isotopic ratio of the world's surface waters changed at the K-T boundary, as recorded by the shells of preserved oceanic organisms, we could compute the fraction of the world's biosphere that must have burned on this really bad day (or soon thereafter):*

## Carbon isotopic evidence for biomass burning at the K-T boundary

A new interpretation of existing carbon isotopic data combined with results from a biogeochemical model suggests that burning of terrestrial biomass occurred on a global scale at the Cretaceous-Tertiary (K-T) boundary. Carbon isotopic ratios from planktonic and benthic microfossils across the K-T boundary reveal not only a breakdown in the normal surface-water to deep-water gradient of  $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$ , but also a reversal at the boundary. This reversal cannot be explained by the cessation of primary production alone. We propose that combustion of terrestrial biomass with subsequent transfer of isotopically light carbon to surface waters is the most likely cause of this anomaly. A biogeochemical model is used to quantify the extent of burning at the boundary: combustion of roughly 25% of the above-ground biomass at the end of the Cretaceous is necessary to account for the observed isotopic signal.

Ivany and Salawitch, *Geology*, 1993

Link to this paper appears in auxiliary reading for today's class

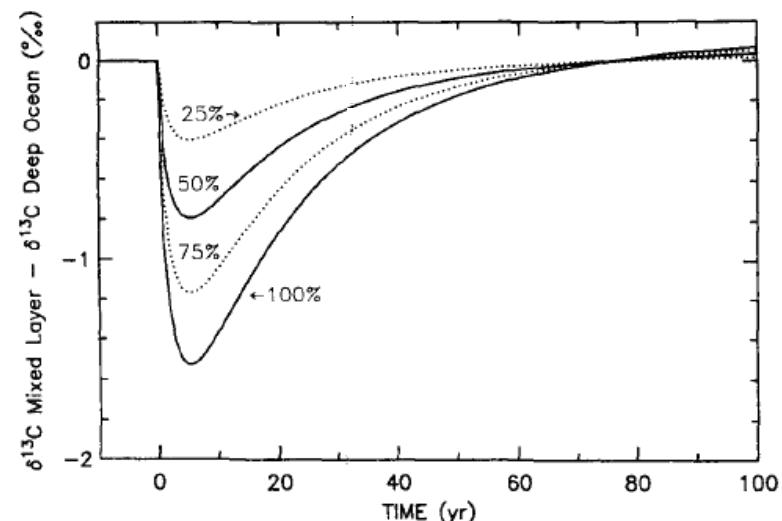
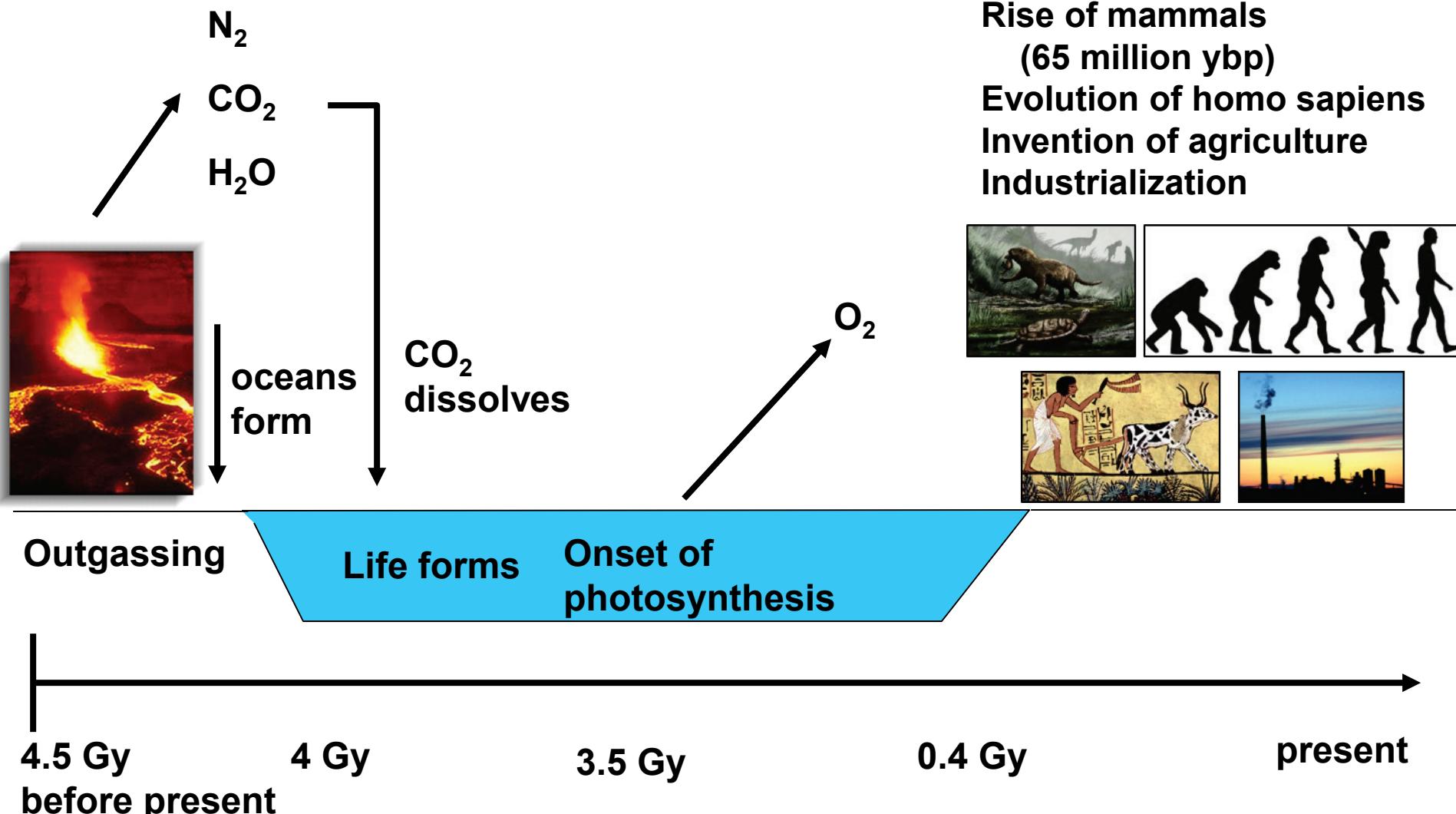


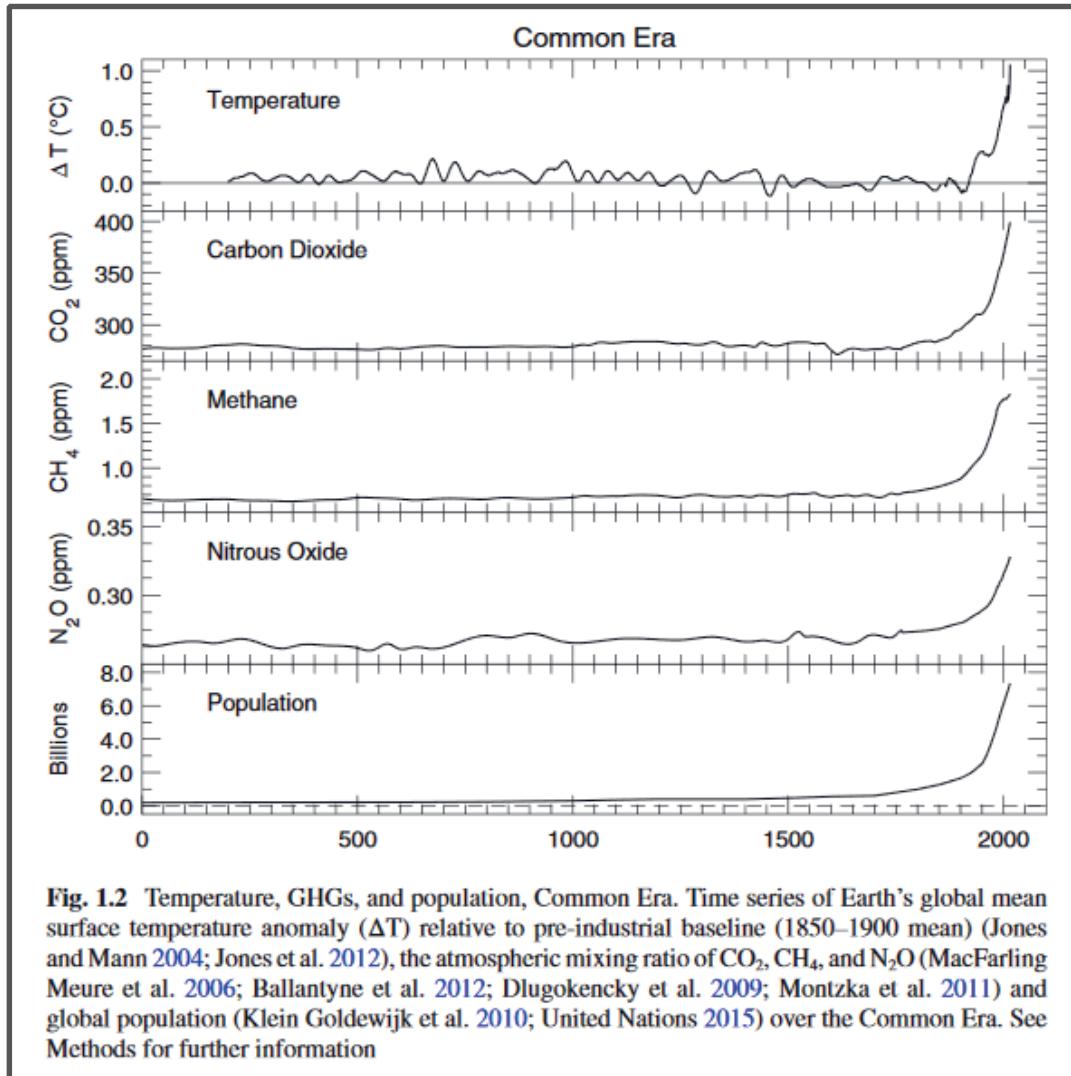
Figure 2. Variation of surface-water to deep-water gradient of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  vs. time for simulations of biomass combustion, assumed to occur instantaneously at time zero. Results are shown for burning 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% of above-ground biomass ( $10^{18} \text{ g C}$ ;  $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -25.7\text{\textperthousand}$ ) at end of Cretaceous assuming combustion efficiency of 50% (i.e., model result for 100% combustion corresponds to injection of half of above-ground biomass carbon into atmosphere as  $\text{CO}_2$  at time zero).

# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Human Influence*



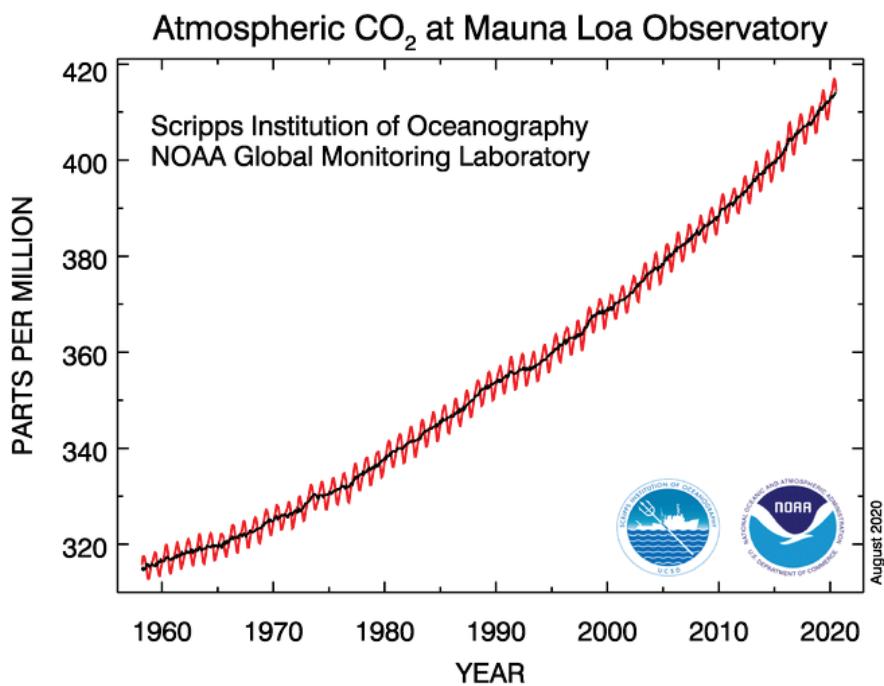
# Geological Evolution of Earth's Atmosphere: *Human Influence*

What message were we trying to convey?



# Earth's Atmosphere – Effect of Humans

$\text{CO}_2$ : ~412 parts per million (ppm) and rising !



Charles Keeling, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, CA  
[https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/webdata/ccgg/trends/co2\\_data\\_mlo.png](https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/webdata/ccgg/trends/co2_data_mlo.png)

**Human drivers of global warming over the last millennium**

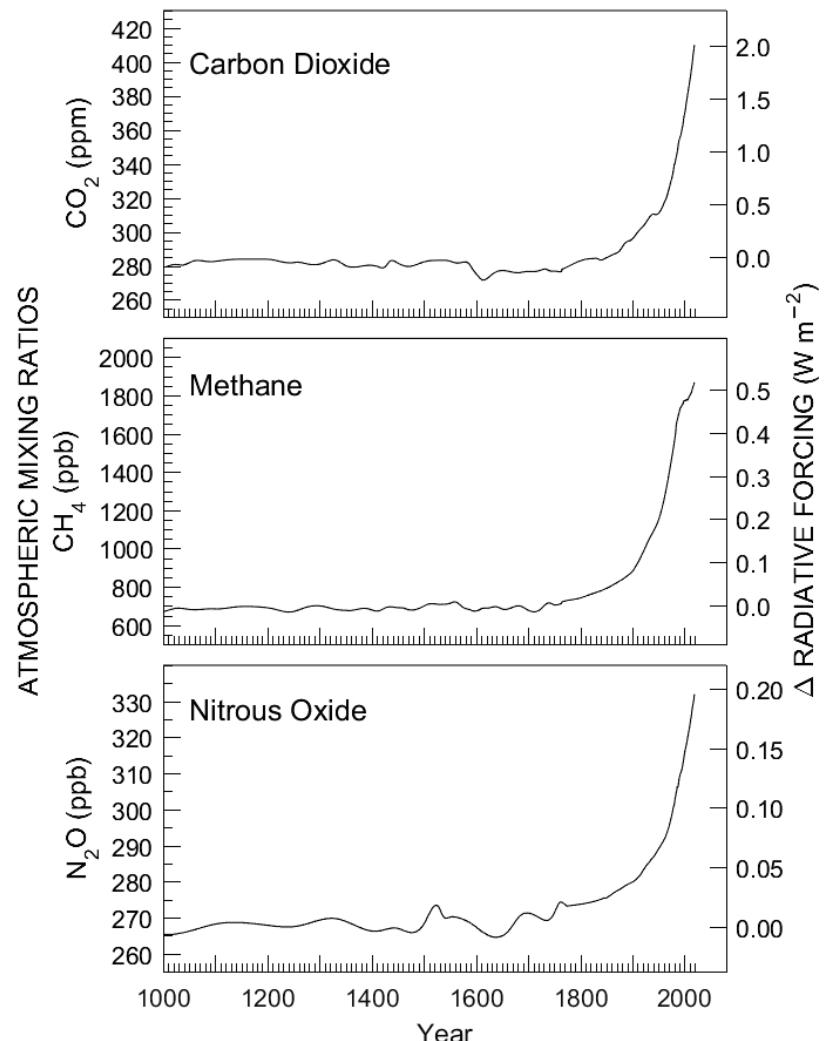
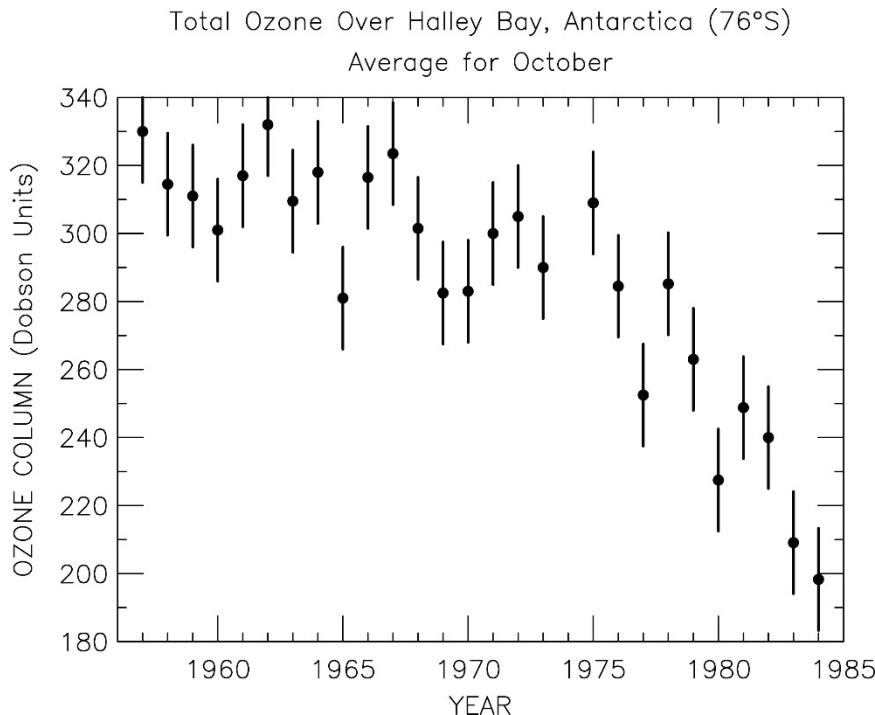


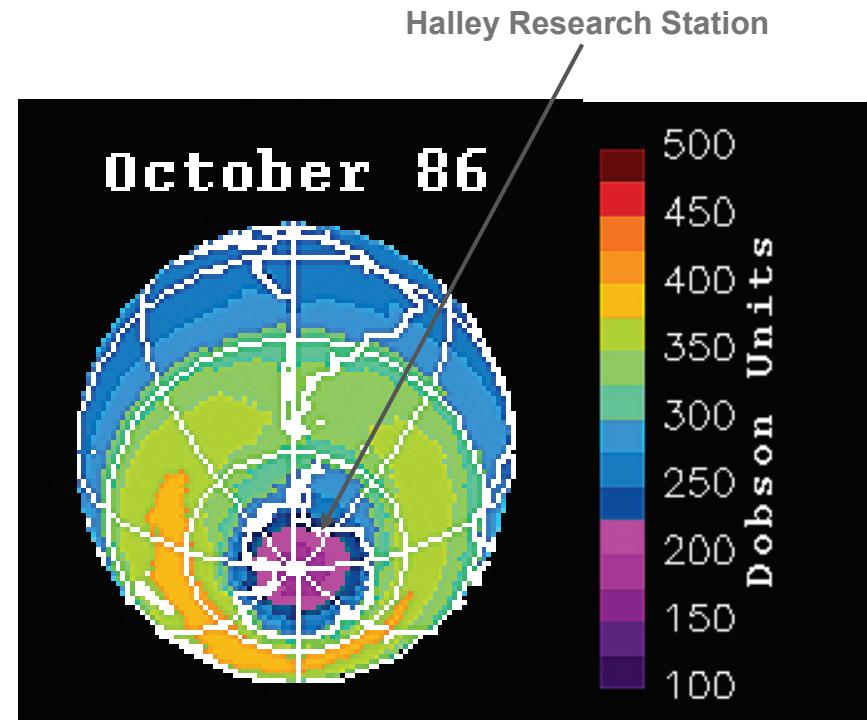
Figure courtesy Brian Bennett, Univ of Md

# Earth's Atmosphere – Effect of Humans

## Stratospheric Ozone – shields surface from solar UV radiation



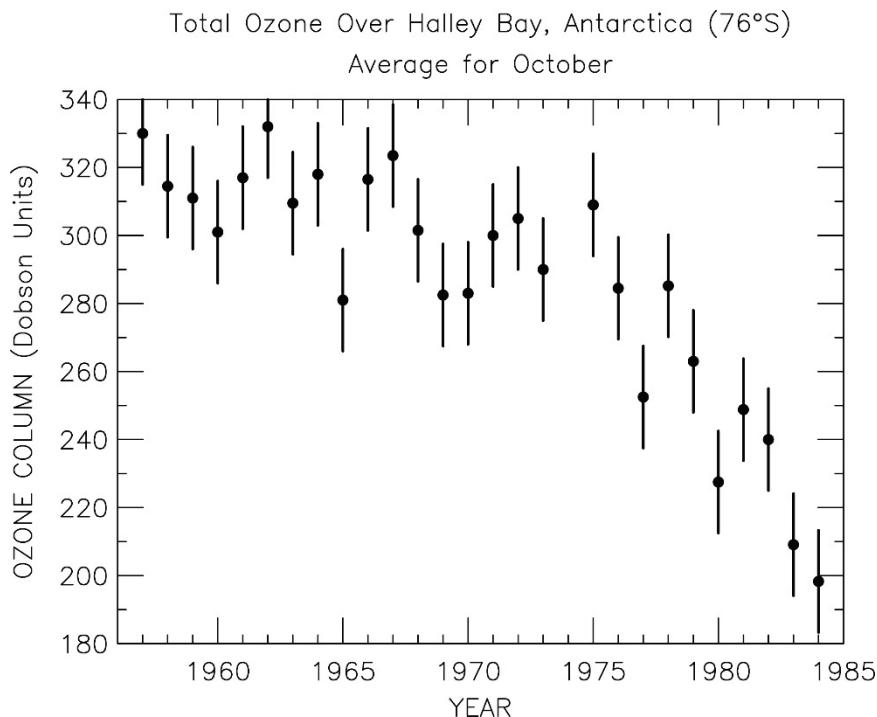
After Farman *et al.*, Large losses of total ozone in Antarctica reveal Seasonal ClO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>x</sub> interaction, Nature, 315, 207, 1985.



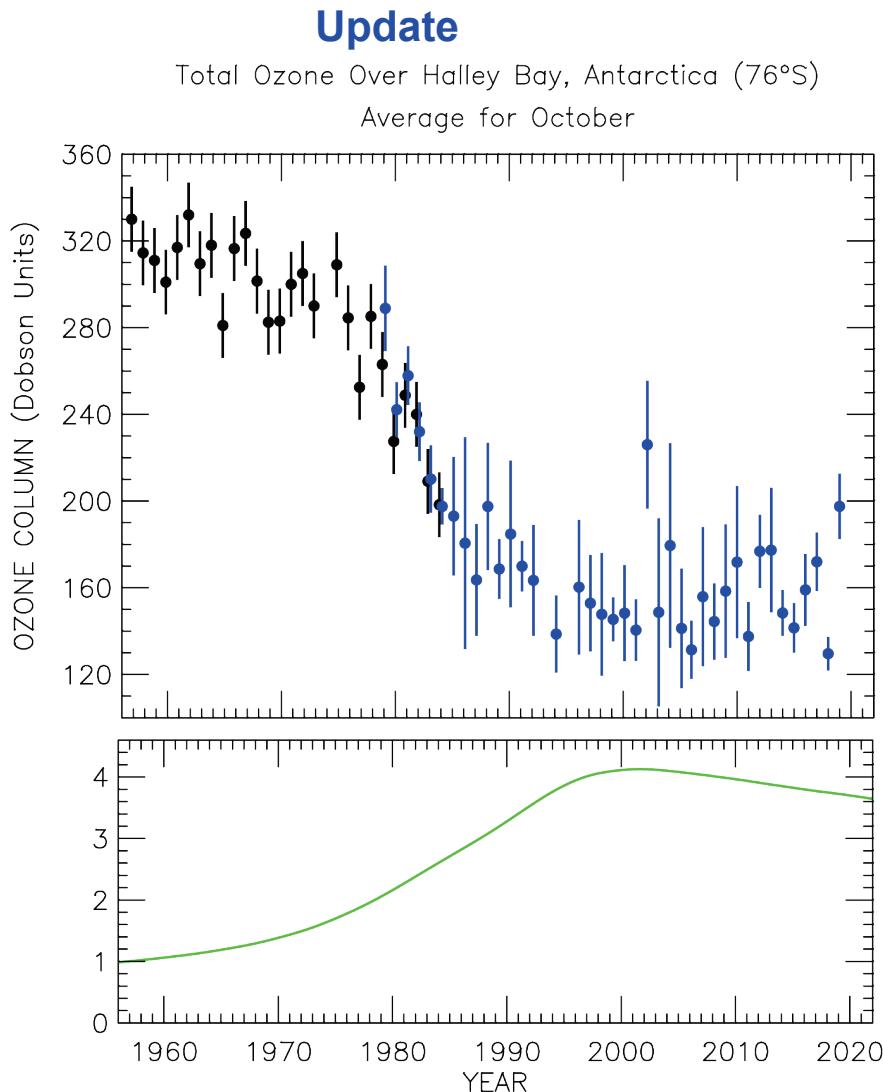
Stolarski *et al.*, Nature, 1986.

# Earth's Atmosphere – Effect of Humans

## Stratospheric Ozone – shields surface from solar UV radiation

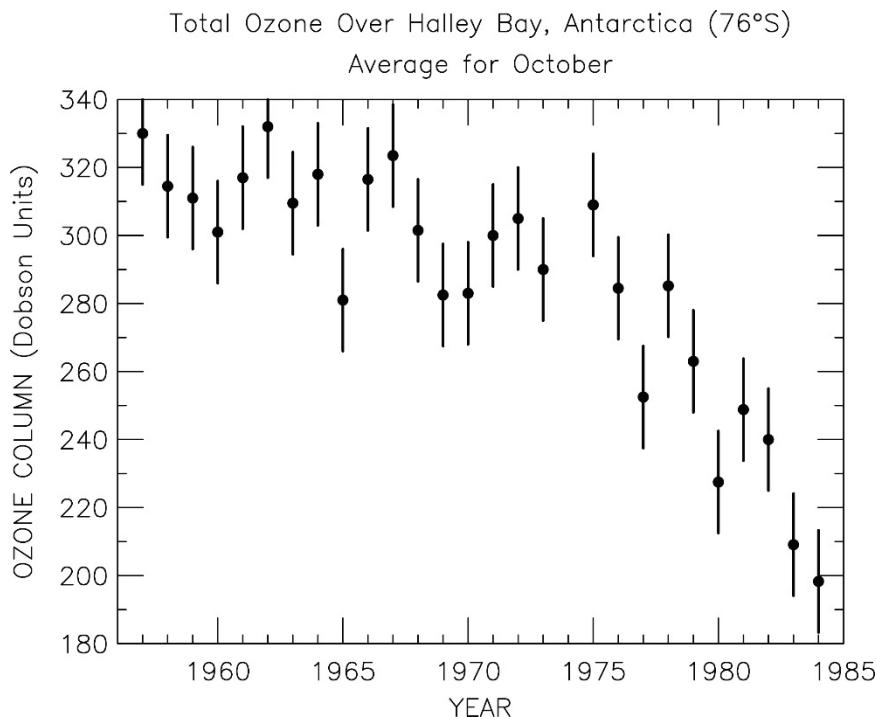


After Farman *et al.*, Large losses of total ozone in Antarctica reveal Seasonal ClO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>x</sub> interaction, Nature, 315, 207, 1985.



# Earth's Atmosphere – Effect of Humans

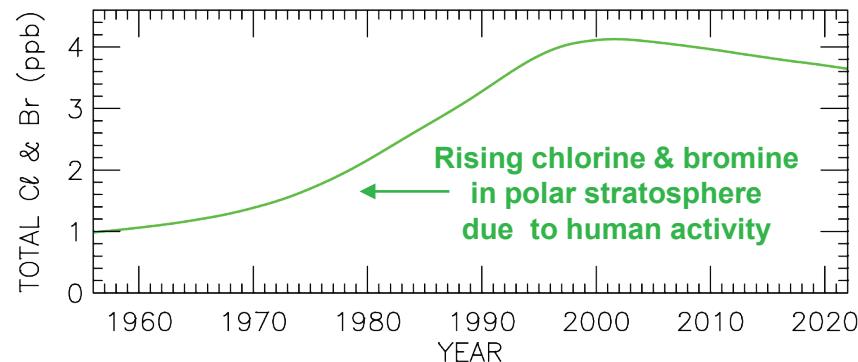
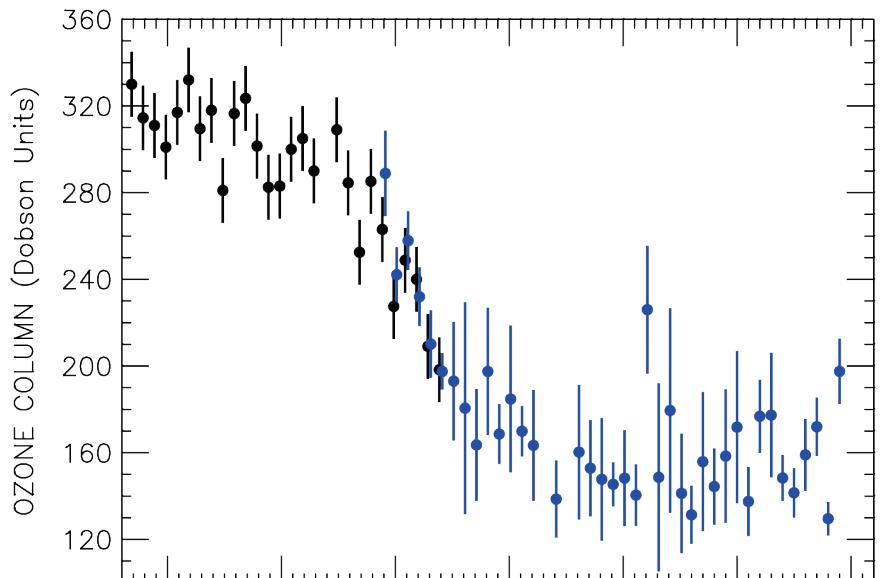
## Stratospheric Ozone – shields surface from solar UV radiation



After Farman *et al.*, Large losses of total ozone in Antarctica reveal Seasonal ClO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>x</sub> interaction, Nature, 315, 207, 1985.

### Update

Total Ozone Over Halley Bay, Antarctica (76°S)  
Average for October

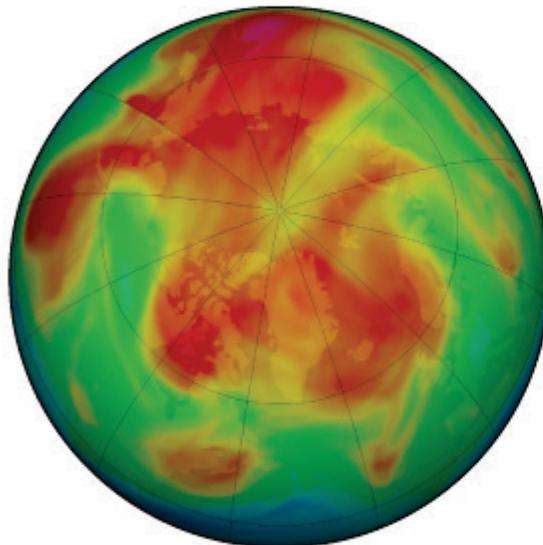


# Stratospheric Ozone In The News

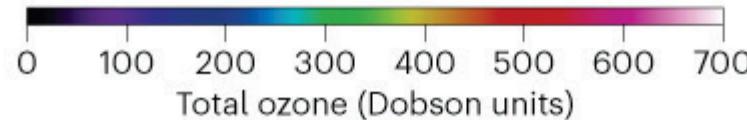
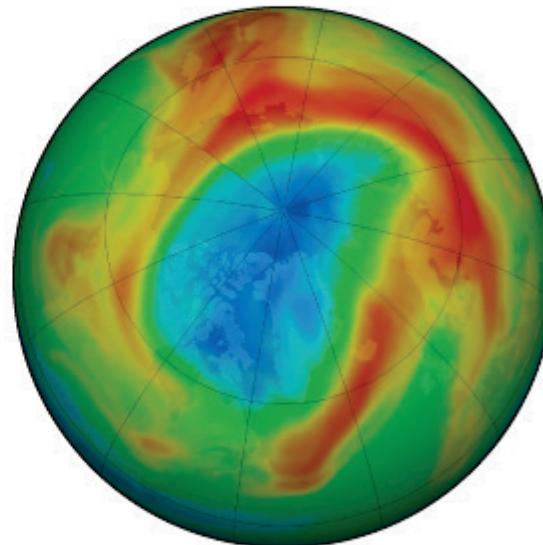
## ARCTIC OPENING

A rare and record ozone hole has formed over the Arctic. An opening in the ozone layer appears each spring over the Antarctic, but the last time this phenomenon was seen in the north was in 2011.

**23 March 2019**



**23 March 2020**



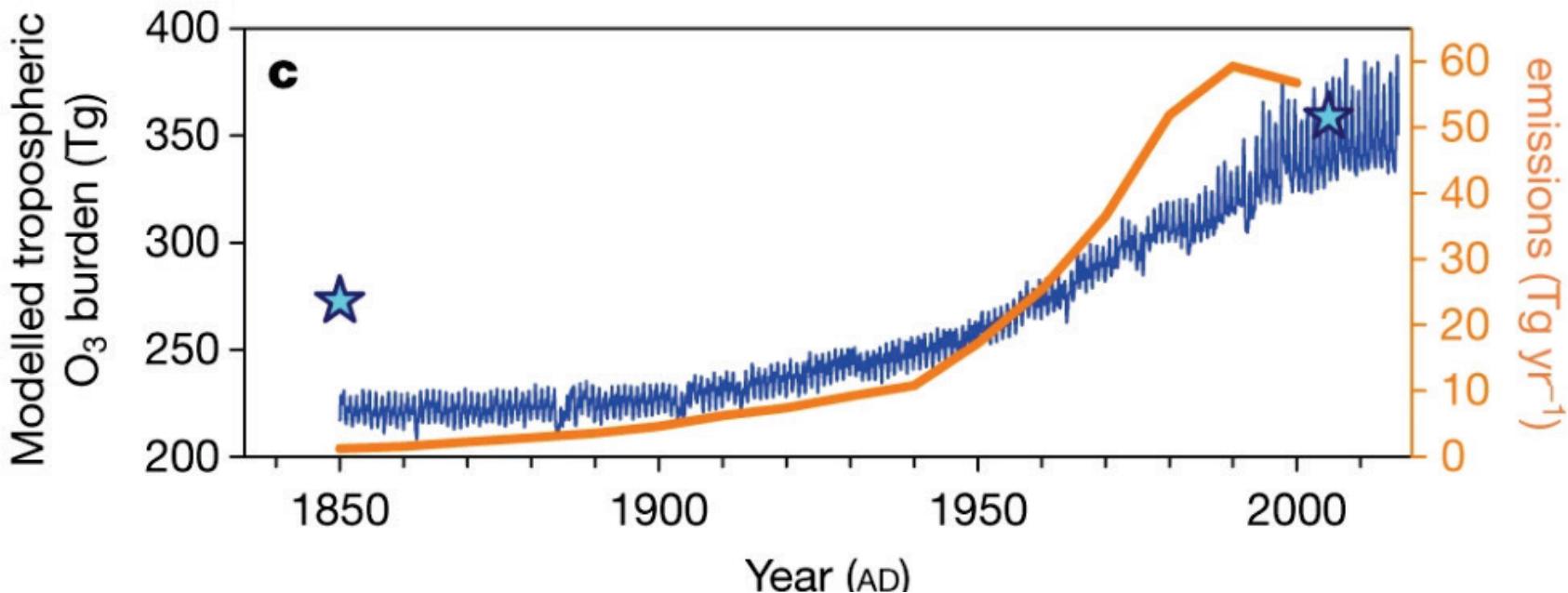
©nature

Source: NASA Ozone Watch

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00904-w>

# Earth's Atmosphere – Effect of Humans

Tropospheric Ozone – oxidant, lung irritant, harmful to crops



Modelled increase in tropospheric O<sub>3</sub> burden from the GEOS-Chem/MERRA2 model (cyan stars) and GISS-E2.1 model (blue line), as well as estimates of historical emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> (orange line).

Yueng *et al.*, *Nature*, 2019

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-019-1277-1>

# Next Lecture: Course Overview

Readings: IPCC 2007 FAQ 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, & 3.1 (11 pages)

EPA Air Quality Guide (11 pages)

20 QAs Ozone Layer Q1, 2, 7, and 14 (11 pages)

Paris Beacon of Hope, Sect 1.2.2 (3 pages)

**Note: 36 pages, about our norm**

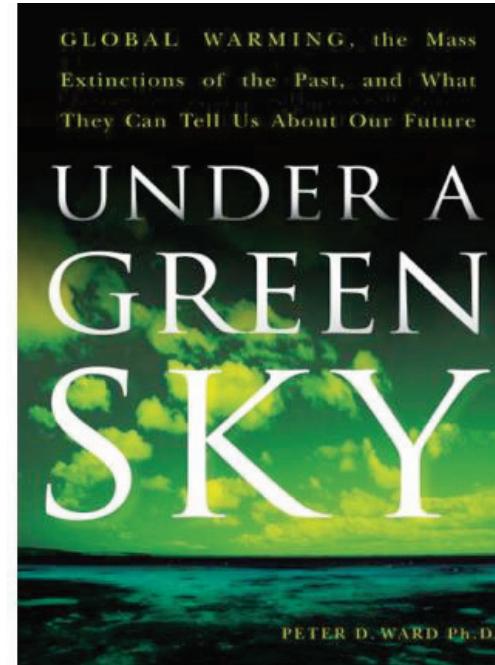
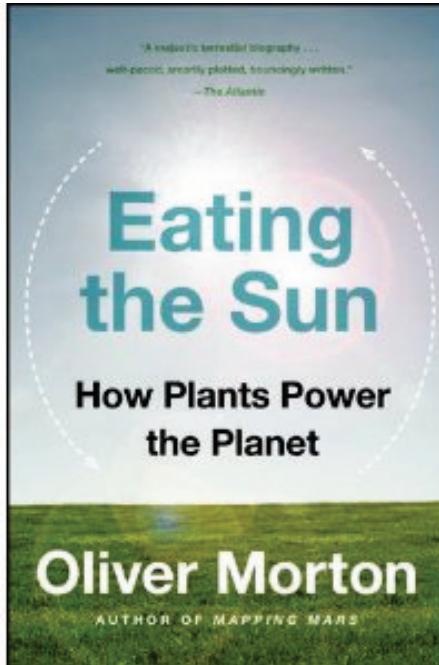
**Admission Ticket** for Lecture 2 is posted on ELMS

**Ross is a newly elected member of the UMD Senate  
and the first Senate meeting of the semester is  
Tues, 8 Sept, at 3:15 pm.**

**As a result, next Tuesday, we will begin lecture promptly at 2:00 pm  
and we will end lecture at 3:14 pm**

# Source Material

**These books are a great resource for how photosynthesis works as well as the history of atmospheric composition**



[http://www.amazon.com/Eating-Sun-Plants-Power-Planet/dp/0007163657/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1359325940&sr=1-1&keywords=eating+the+sun](http://www.amazon.com/Eating-Sun-Plants-Power-Planet/dp/0007163657/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1359325940&sr=1-1&keywords=eating+the+sun)

[http://www.amazon.com/Under-Green-Sky-Warming-Extinctions/dp/0061137928/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1359326345&sr=1-1&keywords=under+a+green+sky](http://www.amazon.com/Under-Green-Sky-Warming-Extinctions/dp/0061137928/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1359326345&sr=1-1&keywords=under+a+green+sky)

**and provided some of the source material for much of this lecture**