

The Oil Drum: Campfire

Discussions about Energy and Our Future

Thanksgiving Open Campfire Thread

Posted by [Nate Hagens](#) on November 29, 2009 - 10:54am in [The Oil Drum: Campfire](#)

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

Below the fold is a short Thanksgiving comment followed by some Campfire discussion questions.

I just got back from visiting family in North Dakota. Lovely time. Lots of pigs, dogs, food and drink. The family in question live very remotely on a farm. A simple insight struck me as the wine flowed and the conversation turned from Tiger Woods car crash and the CRU email scandal to deeper conversations of overshoot, aboriginal wisdom and mitigation of our 'predicament', all topics this couple was well aware of, though they never frequent TheOilDrum and we've never had these discussions previously.



I have begun to notice, perhaps subjectively, that people living in relative seclusion (or more introverted) seem more likely to accept/understand the wider implications of our societies current overconsumptive path, irrespective of education or demographic. I wonder if this is due to some personality trait, or more just a function of less exposure to the availability cascade of confirmatory bias in the media and consumer culture. For my own n=1 example, though I've always been curious and 'educated', it wasn't until I went out west and hiked solo for 9 months that I was able to see the 'truth' about our cultural/resource trajectory, biased certainly by my own blindspots, but by no one elses.

I suspect proximity to nature might also play a role in more easily coming to terms with an overshoot situation. Seeing lights, buildings and electricity and action 24/7 might make imagining a different future more difficult than if one deals with natural forces and the hardships of farming on a constant basis - the disconnect may not be as great. I am trying to write an essay on cognitive dissonance but am encountering too much cognitive load.

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Since I just got home so have chores to do etc so without further preamble here are tonights Campfire questions:

- 1)Do you think there is a correlation, whether due to cognitive dissonance or availability cascade, between ones proximity to our conspicuous consumptive culture, with belief/recognition in peak oil, limits to growth, human overshoot, etc? E.g. are people with very active social calendars less likely either to have time or to cognitively process the wide boundary limits problems?
- 2)Would we (as a nation, region, locale etc.) benefit from a mandatory 'meditation vacation', where people would annually get a paid 2 week vacation with only stipulation being that there would be no TV, radio, or internet, just books, talking, hiking in nature etc? (certainly hard to enforce - I'm just curious if such downtime would provide insights/awareness that our pell mell overstimulated schedules today cannot.)
- 3)During Thanksgiving, did you have any new insights, answers, paths with respect to our energy/environmental/social situation? If so please share...



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