



# Environmental Problems As a Place for Compromise and Dialogue

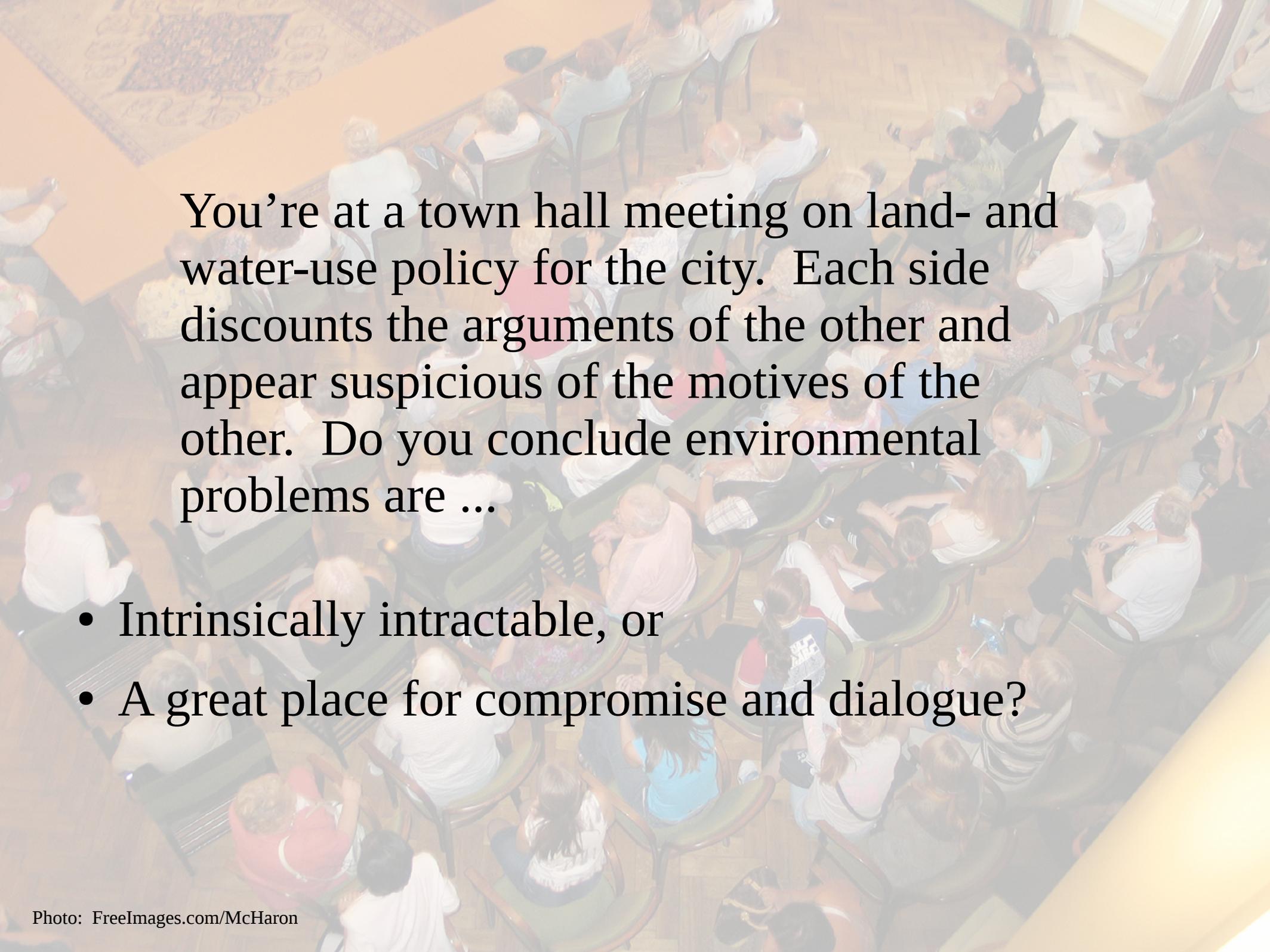
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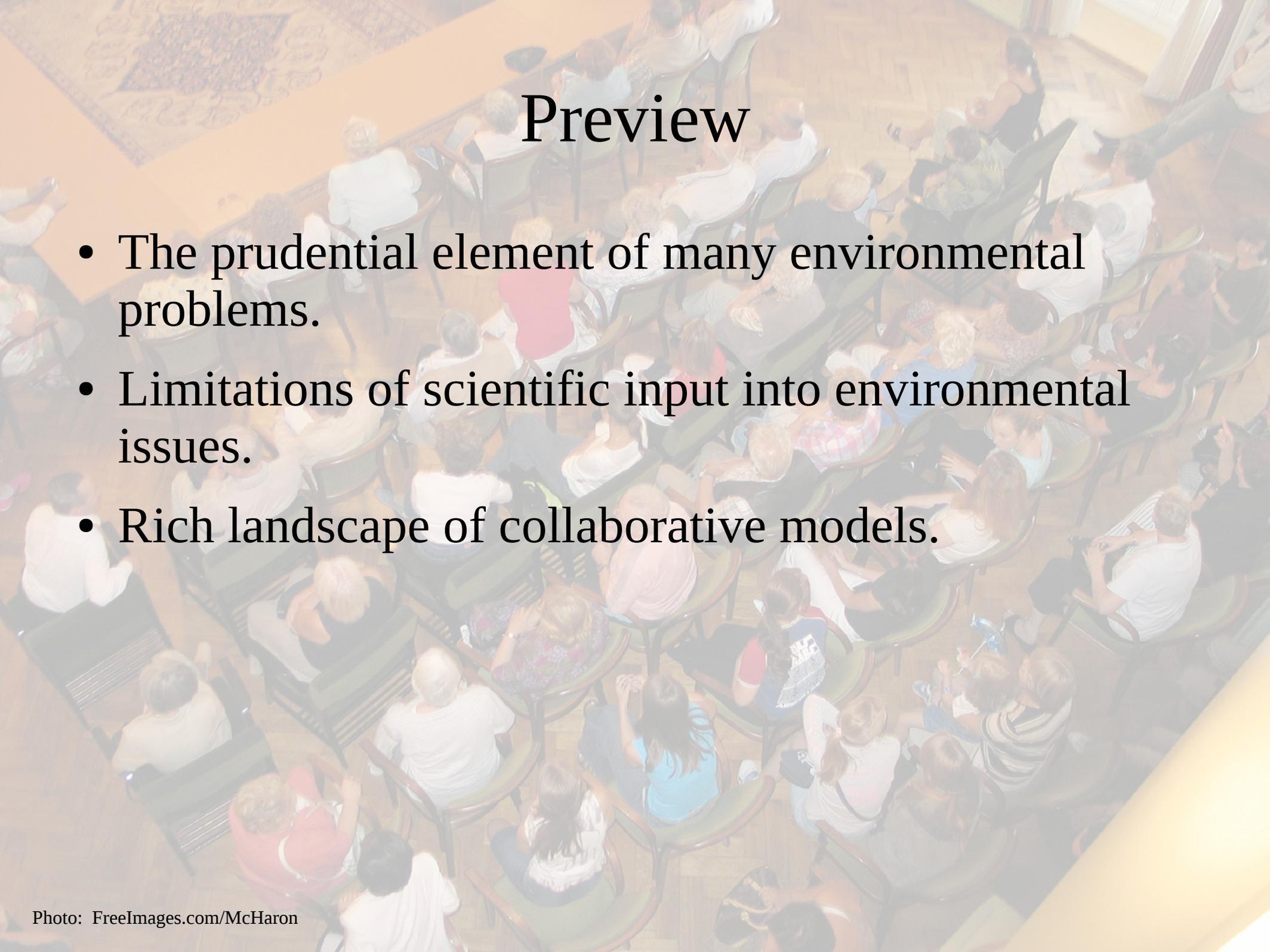
# Imagine the Following Scenario ...





You're at a town hall meeting on land- and water-use policy for the city. Each side discounts the arguments of the other and appear suspicious of the motives of the other. Do you conclude environmental problems are ...

- Intrinsically intractable, or
- A great place for compromise and dialogue?



# Preview

- The prudential element of many environmental problems.
- Limitations of scientific input into environmental issues.
- Rich landscape of collaborative models.

# Environmental Issues Have a Prudential Component



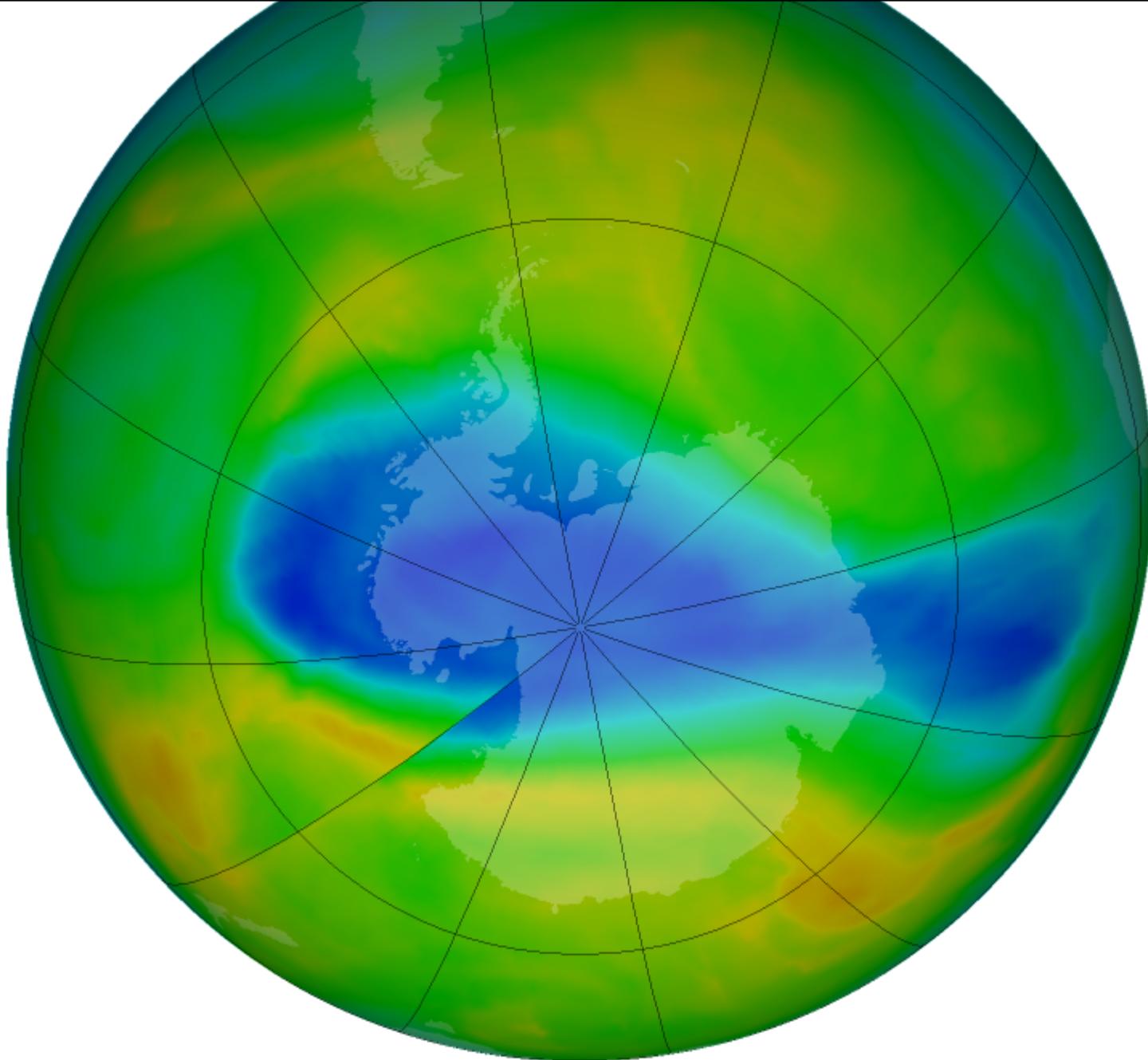
# Prudential vs. Moral Judgments

<b>Prudential</b>	<b>Moral</b>
Dependent on context	Imperative: Must do
Practical wisdom limited by (a blend of) principles	Few cases where it can be directly applied
Open to multiple strategies	Open or closed to multiple strategies, depending on nature of moral principle

# Ex.: Global Warming Responses Not Rigidly Constrained by Moral Principles

<b>Some Environmental Moral Principles</b>	<b>Possible Responses</b>
Ethics of stewardship and care	Carbon tax
Rights of future generations	Tradable emission credits
Private property rights	Air capture
Intrinsic value of nature	Adaptation

# Science May Not Prescribe Policy

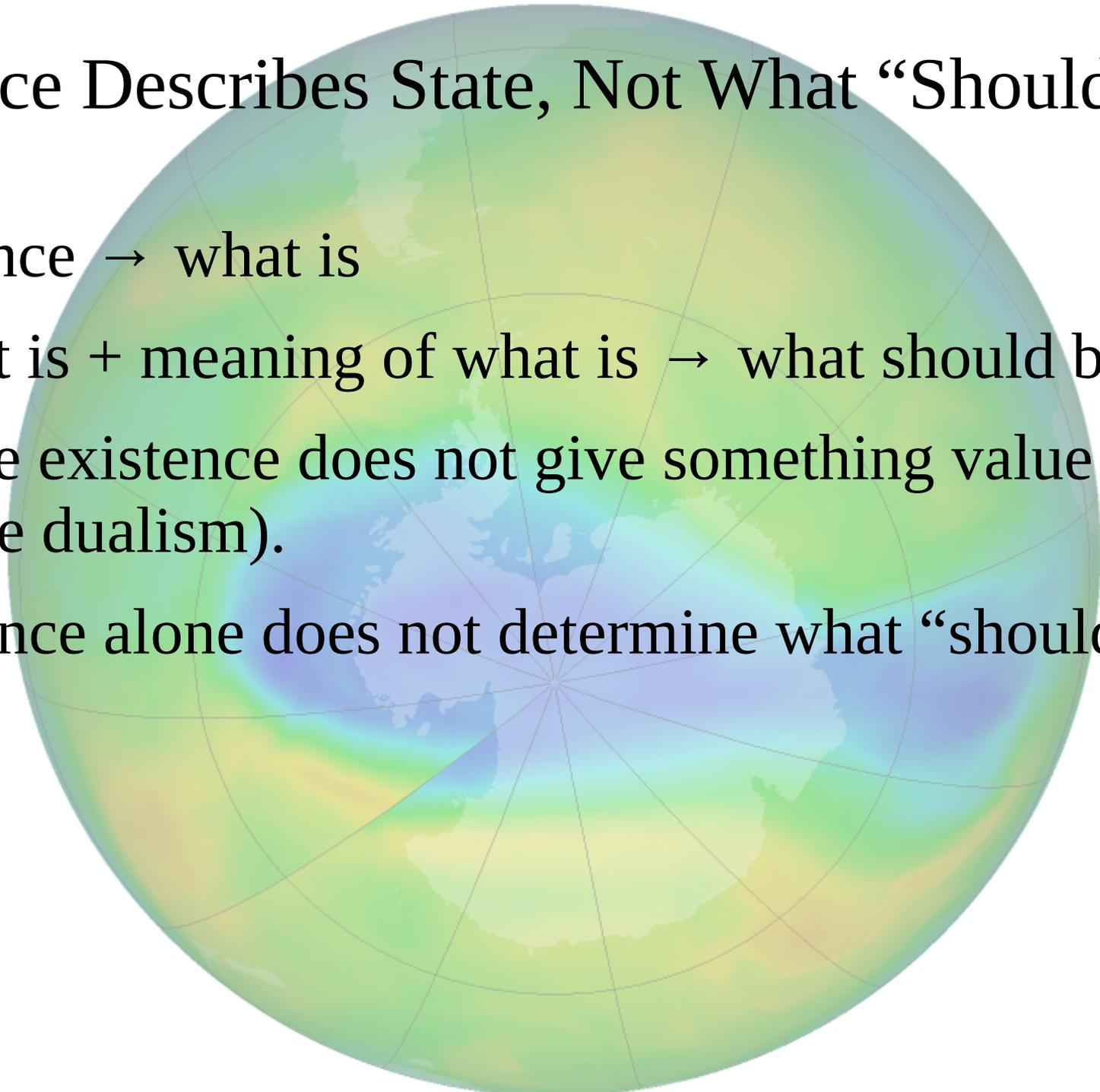


Stratospheric ozone on November 6, 2012

Credit: NASA Ozone Watch

# Science Describes State, Not What “Should Be”

- science → what is
- what is + meaning of what is → what should be
- Mere existence does not give something value (fact-value dualism).
- Science alone does not determine what “should be”

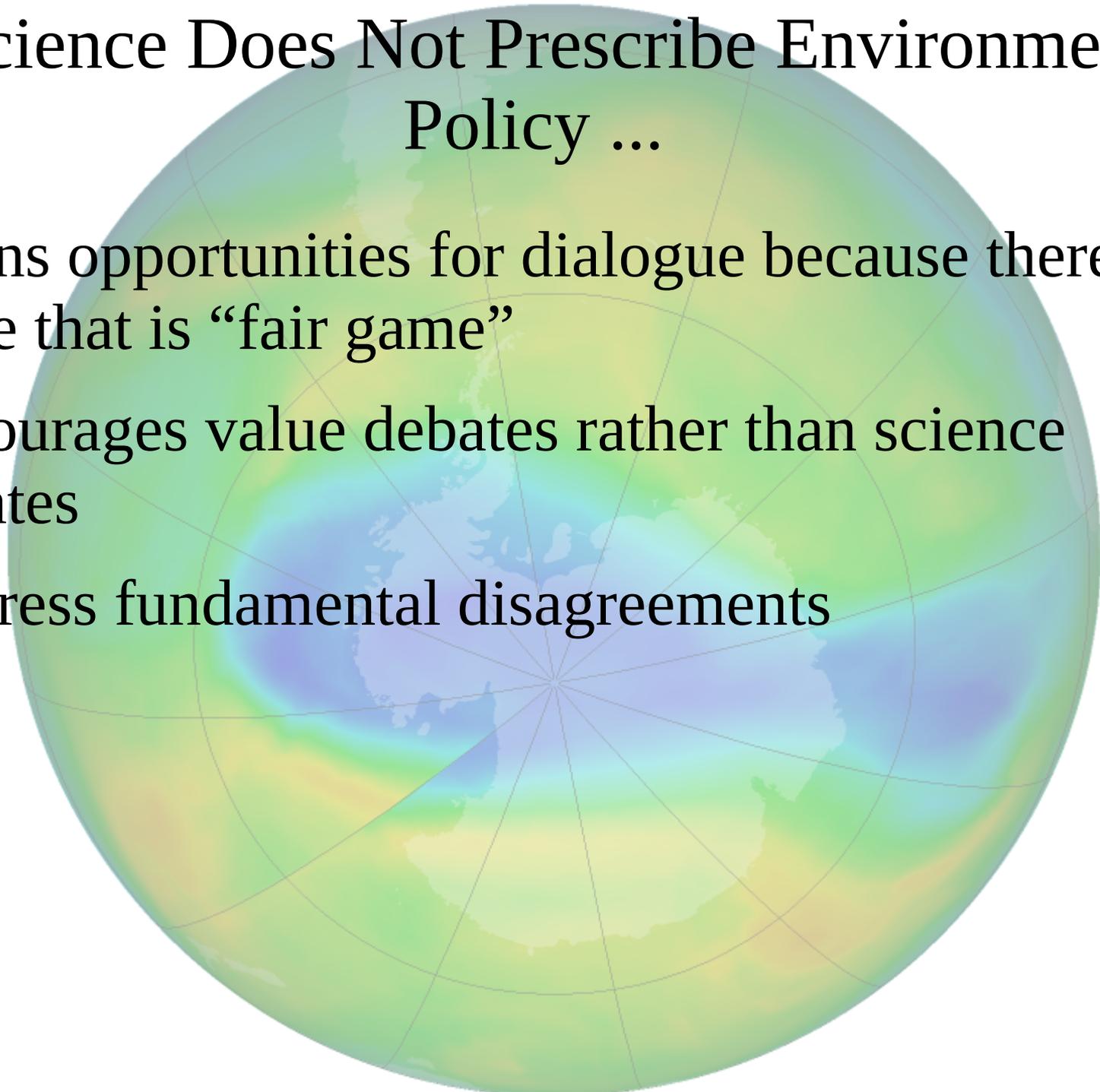


# Ex.: Montreal Protocol Not Entirely Science Led

- Conventional wisdom:
  - Science discovered ozone hole and cause
  - Policy-makers listened to scientists and banned CFCs
  - The ozone hole was closed
- What actually happened (Sarewitz 2004, Pielke 2007):
  - Political action occurred even while science was uncertain
  - Tiered policies (vs. an all-out ban) helped stimulate research into alternatives
  - Creation of alternatives defused probable conflicts between stakeholders

# If Science Does Not Prescribe Environmental Policy ...

- Opens opportunities for dialogue because there is more than just a “fair game”
- Encourages value debates rather than science debates
- Address fundamental disagreements



# Many Collaborative Models Exist



# Interior Columbia River Basin Management Plan

- 10-year effort begun in the Clinton administration
- Science as a neutral meeting ground for disparate stakeholders to discuss: forestry, environmentalists, fisheries, agriculture, etc.
- Science produced assessments in a value-neutral way, not policy judgments
- Result: “a forum within which otherwise polarized interests may engage in productive dialogue and analysis of options” (Mills and Clark 2001)

# “Collaboration Model” of Natural Resources Planning

- Start not with what does science know but what local knowledge do the stakeholders (particularly long-time residents) possess
- Various stakeholders decide what they do not know but need to to manage the resources involved
- Research commissioned to fill-in only those gaps
- Result: common ground amongst adversaries, healthier role for science

# The Colossian Forum Model

- Conflict in churches as opportunities for spiritual formation
- The fundamentals of faith and common disciplines are strong enough to lean-on in the midst of conflict
- Curriculum to train small group leaders in churches to address areas of cultural conflict: origins, human sexuality
- Result: Christ is glorified, love is shown even amidst disagreement
- <https://colossianforum.org>

# Conclusion



# Environmental Conflict Can Yield Compromise and Dialogue

- Look for the prudential element in environmental problems
- Pivot away from science to towards values
- Choose models of engagement that support embedded dialogue between antagonists
- Result: More robust, flexible, locally tuned, and broadly supported responses

# Analyze Creation Care to Support Compromise and Dialogue

*The Nature of Environmental Stewardship*  
(Pickwick Publications, 2016)

<http://nature.johnny-lin.com>

- Sample chapter on website
- Amazon: Print, Kindle

See also *God and Nature Magazine*, Spring  
2019

