

**Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World** by K. Hayhoe ISBN 9781982143831, Atria/One Signal Publishers, 2021 Paperback, 320 pages, Price: \$18.99.

If you are involved in any sort of science communication, or communication in general, I recommend reading *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in A Divided World* by Katherine Hayhoe. The book is useful to any range scientist or manager looking to increase their communication efficacy and toolbox.

Beyond science communication, the book will be useful to those wanting to know more about the history of climate science, the urgency of climate change, how reaction has been stymied in the last 30 or so years, and some solutions to lessen its impact.

The first part of the book summarizes a diverse array of findings from social science that can inform better communication, and “why facts matter – and why they are not enough,” especially with regards to climate change. Dr. Hayhoe writes that all conversations are about “facts, feelings and identities” not just facts and ideas. If someone asks you to buy into information that seems to threaten your identity, it is unlikely that you will do so.

Yet, in our communication strategies in science and interpersonally, many of us prioritize facts as we see them, disregarding the role that identity and feelings (our own, and other's) may play in the conversation.

To overcome this and improve communication about climate change, Dr. Hayhoe writes that it is important to relate science to values people already have. “People already have the values they need to think and act on climate change,” she writes, “they just haven't connected the dots yet.” She gives examples of giving talks, for example at the Rotary Club, where she made last minute changes to be able to frame climate science in context of the Club's values. I can see application of these principles in aspects of range management, where often it is not just about information, it is about livelihood, economics, identity, and beyond.

Dr. Hayhoe writes that “we often feel compelled to dump scary data on people so they will share our fears.” We believe people will react to facts in predictable ways, but, spoiler alert, they may not. “Dumping scary facts” can backfire because it can lead to inaction, or the facts might be entirely unconvincing and alienating. Instead of forcing someone to share your fears, and dumping scary facts, she recommends starting from a place of commonality, relating to a specific consequence of climate change in your local area, relating to values people already have, and pointing to actions that people can and are already working on.

The ability to relate climate science to values people already have depends on knowing your audience. Dr. Hayhoe's evangelical Christian faith is a primary motivation for her being a climate scientist. She argues that all of us are most effective acting within communities whose values we share, not only because we know the audience, but also because we care about that audience. She cites a story of a conversation she had with a man who wanted to mobilize Christian leaders to take actions on climate change. “What church do you go to?” she asked him, to which he replied that he was not religious. She then redirected his desire to act on climate change in a group with whom he *did* participate, rather than trying to ‘convince’ a group he was not a part of. This is another worthwhile lesson – many of us would like to tell people how to live. But it's ineffective and disingenuous to do if you don't care about and participate in the community you are trying to convince, and you may miss the mark because you don't understand the audience.

Best communication practices won't work with everyone, however. *Saving Us* dives into the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication's “Global Warming's Six Americas,”<sup>1</sup> which has identified “six unique audiences within the American public that responds to the issue in their own distinct way” and “have different psychological, cultural, and political reasons for acting – or not acting – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” According to this framework, “Dismissives” believe “global warming is not happening, human-caused, or a threat”<sup>1</sup>, and believe it is a hoax. Dr. Hayhoe recommends, based on the science and her own experience, that it is not worth your time to convince “dismissives.” The good news if you would like to see action on climate change, according to Yale, these are only 7% of Americans. These voices tend to be loud. But leaves out a lot of us who are not so hardened in our beliefs. The “Six Americas” is also useful in terms of understanding that a “one-size-fits-all approach” is unlikely to work with communication about any topic – instead, it's critical to know your audience. If only we had a “Six Americas” for grazing practices and rangeland science.



# BOOK REVIEW

<sup>1</sup> <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/about/projects/global-warmings-six-americas/>

The second part of the book dives into climate science, and potential solutions. This is a succinct summary of the mechanism behind climate change, and how scientists have ruled out other hypotheses that would have explained why the planet is warming, and potential solutions. As I learned in the book, this will be entirely unconvincing to a climate “dismissive.” But for the rest of us, I found it to be a coherent and accessible summary.

One area where the book came up short was in the limited information about rangelands. In fairness, the book is not about rangelands, and the rangeland-related discussions amount to a few paragraphs to pages. However, the characterization of the rangeland/climate feedback was oversimplified, and the greenhouse gas emissions from sectors of the livestock industry were similarly oversimplified. As climate change continues to drive policy and impact rangelands and livelihoods, I hope range scientists and managers can more proactively engage with climate scientists to shape their direction in accounting, adaptation, and mitigation strategies.

I learned about climate change in 1999, in high school science. I remember it being a shocking revelation. But, given that I thought my parents were super uncool and wrong about everything anyway, it seemed fitting that they’d also be warming the planet. I was horrified then, but perhaps more horrifying is that the impacts of climate change have become part of reality: the current historic drought, forest fires, increasing financial insecurity of rangeland-based livelihoods, and the list goes on.

Since I was a teenager, some things have improved in our ability to combat climate change (technology, costs of renewable energy, global agreements), and some things have gotten worse –specifically division around the issue (apparently Nancy Pelosi and Mitch McConnell were both publicly concerned about climate change about 25 years ago!). Today, I experience this divide every day in communities I live and work in. I am careful not to alienate people by “forcing them to believe in climate change,” focusing instead on mitigating its impacts. As a practitioner, *Saving Us* has a wealth of constructive suggestions for navigating my situation. Meanwhile, the impacts of climate change seem increasingly devastating, and I’d be lying if I said I was optimistic about the trajectory we are on. But if Katherine Hayhoe, who fends off trolls on Twitter every day, can sound optimistic, so can I.

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