

Our Warming Oceans



Robert Thunell

Senior Associate Dean for Natural Sciences, Earth and Ocean Sciences

CURRENT RESEARCH


20 years of observation illuminates how people are affecting climate change

Climate change--we have all heard that the Earth is warmer now than it was 100 years ago. However, some disagreement still remains over whether this warming is due to the natural cycle of climate variability or if humans are driving the higher temperatures. Dr. Robert Thunell, of the University of South Carolina, is a biogeochemist who studies the impact of climate change on marine ecosystems on a variety of different time scales thereby hoping to settle this argument. Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Thunell's work puts recent climate change into the context of how Earth's climate has changed over the last several thousands to tens of thousands of years. His work indicates that humans are in fact driving both the rate and magnitude of climate change as the change in the last century is outside of the range of natural variability. Therefore, his work may become instrumental in how we alter the human activity that may be threatening our planet.

As one of the founding Principal Investigators of the Cariaco Ocean Time Series, Dr. Thunell's research has documented significant changes in the marine ecosystem in response to climate change using nearly twenty years of observations and data collection. The Cariaco Ocean Time Series, serving as a platform for the international scientific community, attracts researchers from around the world and is one of only three long-term ocean time series funded by the National Science Foundation. As a unique time-series of oceanographic observations, it captures present ecological, biological, geological, and chemical change in the Cariaco Basin, along the northern margin of Venezuela. Thus, Dr. Thunell's work at the Cariaco Ocean Time Series has allowed him to document...

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AFFILIATION

 University of South Carolina

EDUCATION

- B.S., in Geology, 1973 , Brown University
- M.S., in Oceanography, 1978 , University of Rhode Island
- Ph.D., in Oceanography, 1978 , University of Rhode Island
- Postdoctoral Scholar, in Oceanography, 1979 , Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

AWARDS

- Elected Fellow, 1987
- W. Storrs Cole Research Award, 1991
- Editor's Citation for Excellence in Refereeing, 1994
- Elected Fellow, 2006
- Elected Fellow, 2006

RESEARCH AREAS

Environment, Ecology, Geology, Oceanic

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Robert Thunell, of the University of South Carolina, as he documents changes in the marine ecosystem in response to climate change. Donations will support the necessary \$200K-300K per year required to support personnel, research cruises, and lab equipment. In choosing to donate, you will play a role in putting recent climate change into the context of historical climate change.