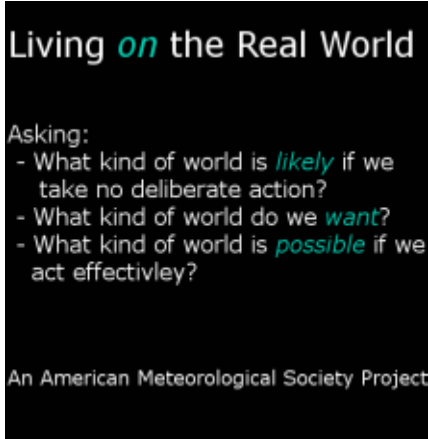


To protect ecosystem services, front-load investment in environmental intelligence.

Living on the Real World



Meteorologists aren't alone in making forecasts. Ecologists make them too. One such recent forecast suggests that *without major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere, terrestrial ecosystems worldwide are at risk of major transformation, with accompanying disruption of ecosystem services and impacts on biodiversity.*

Disruption of ecosystem services? Just what are ecosystem services, and how concerned should we be? Some *LOTRW* readers may be all too familiar with these notions, but here's a bit of background for the rest of us, lifted from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, by way of Wikipedia (with some minor edits):

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report 2005 defines ecosystem services as benefits people obtain from ecosystems and distinguishes four categories of ecosystem services, where the so-called supporting services are regarded as the basis for the services of the other three categories.

Supporting services: These include services such as nutrient recycling, primary production and soil formation. These services make it possible for the ecosystems to provide services such as food supply, flood regulation, and water purification.
