

## **Floods, Fires and Hurricanes**

*Mariane Kulick*

Climate change is no longer an abstract thing dreamed up by scientists, as the Republicans would have you believe. It's real and it has already begun. The worst will be left for our children and grandchildren but even now it's here and affecting our lives.

Were there always floods and fires? Yes, there were, but we are making them infinitely worse and more frequent. With all our technology one would think that we would make the earth safer and better. Instead we are hastening natural disasters.

We know that the first responders to the tragedy of 911 who breathed in the dust and smoke have been at risk for all sorts of health problems, including cancer, gastrointestinal diseases, and asthma. The people in Texas have been subjected to contaminated waters and chemical spills from industrial activities. Puerto Rico has already confirmed ten suspected cases of leptospirosis, a disease transmitted via contaminated waters. There is danger of the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases where there is stagnant water.

Research shows that our sea life is affected

by increasing acidification as the oceans absorb the carbon dioxide we are emitting into the atmosphere. More than one billion people are dependent upon food from warm water coral reefs and they are dying. Global fish stocks are in decline and 90% of large fish are already gone.

The Environmental Protection Agency's website showed unhealthy or hazardous air conditions all over the Pacific Northwest and into Northern California, Idaho and Montana due to the wildfires across the area.

Unfortunately, the EPA under President Trump may show a danger, but is not interested in doing anything about it. His appointee, Scott Pruitt, prior to his becoming the head, was in the business of suing the EPA to get rid of environmental rules. So here we have as head of the EPA someone who does not believe in having an EPA. He rejects the most basic conclusions of climate science.

We owe it to our future generations to fight for a change in the administration and have an EPA which will, as it once did, be a guardian for the earth.