

# 'March for Science' 2018: Still Going Nowhere



By Alex Berezow, PhD — April 10, 2018

# MARCH FOR SCIENCE



Credit: March for Science [1]

Remember the Occupy movement? It began in 2011 and fizzled out a few years later. Why?

Because it stood for nothing. Anything that protesters disliked was a target to be "occupied," so activists used the movement to vent their anger over the status quo. But what exactly made them angry and how they proposed to fix it were never elaborated. Instead, we got endless video footage of protesters camping near city streets, blocking traffic, and [pooping on the sidewalk](#) [2].

Simply put, it is not sufficient for a political movement to express dissatisfaction. If it wants to have a lasting impact, it must have an achievable goal in mind. Without a unifying rallying cry, a political movement risks fading into irrelevance.

The March for Science, which will hold its second march on April 14, is flirting with this fate.

## **March for Science 2018: Still Going Nowhere**

Last week, I contacted the organizers for the March for Science. Given that a year had passed since the inaugural march, I thought they may have taken the time to put together a policy agenda, especially since their [website](#) [3] lists nine board members and eight staff members. I asked them to explain their position on the following issues: animal research, mandatory vaccination, nuclear power, climate change mitigation, GMOs/CRISPR, and organic food/pesticides.

I did not receive an answer to this query. Instead, I was pointed to their website's [campaigns page](#) [4]. To be fair, the March for Science has come a long way from last year, when it primarily concerned itself with [social justice](#) [5], including a [bizarre defense of ISIS terrorists as "marginalized people."](#) [6] Still, the website is disappointing.

There are only two policy positions of any substance: The first is supporting gun violence research,

and the second is to block Scott Pruitt from making any changes to the EPA. The March's position on gun violence research is correct, since it has been woefully lacking in this country. More data is always better than less data. The March's position on the EPA is less defensible, given that the agency has become a bloated bureaucracy in need of reform. Besides, this [statement](#) [7] is particularly annoying:

*The EPA mandate is to safeguard our health and environment. Keep drinking water safe. Shield vulnerable populations from air pollutants that trigger asthma and heart attacks. Protect communities from cancer-causing chemicals. But under Scott Pruitt, the agency is failing to fulfil [sic] even its most basic mandates for society.*

Our drinking water is safe. Even after the lead disaster in Flint, Michigan, [children there still had less lead in their blood](#) [8] than their parents or grandparents. The U.S. has some of the [cleanest air in the world](#) [9]. And cancer-causing chemicals aren't poisoning society, despite [Erin Brockovich's unscientific demagoguery](#) [10].

The March for Science even fails to properly address rather easy issues for which it advocates, such as "[evidence-based wildfire policies](#) [11]." The evidence is straightforward: [Forest management](#) [12], such as clearing out dead trees and underbrush, is the most effective way to prevent wildfires. The March does not acknowledge this reality, and instead focuses on climate change. The rest of the campaigns page is filled with platitudes, such as "Put the 'Science' back in Science," and "Science, Not Silence."

### **March for Science 2019?**

If the March wants to be taken seriously, it needs to do two things.

First, it must develop policy stances on more than just gun research and climate change. Scientists say we should build more nuclear power plants, especially if we want to solve climate change. Scientists say that GMOs are safe. Scientists say that animal research is necessary. What does the March say?

Nothing. It remains silent on issues that the American public often asks about. Most likely, that is because the March's base of supporters would probably *oppose* the scientific consensus on those issues. The loudest supporters of Science (with a capital S) are usually the first to throw it under the bus when it arrives at a conclusion they dislike.

Second, the March must become nonpartisan. To its credit, the website says that "science does not belong to any political party," but that's not [how it operates in practice](#) [13]. A former March organizer (who wishes to remain anonymous) told me he quit because the March was too overtly partisan.

If these issues remain unaddressed, then this year's March may be its last.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/04/10/march-science-2018-still-going-nowhere-12823>

**Links**

- [1] <https://www.marchforscience.com/>
- [2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WI1ObUGAoHE>
- [3] <https://www.marchforscience.com/who-we-are>
- [4] <https://www.marchforscience.com/mfs-in-2018>
- [5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/02/why-scientist-wont-be-attending-science-march-10811>
- [6] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/04/13/hold-my-beer-march-science-defends-isis-marginalized-people-11131>
- [7] <https://www.marchforscience.com/ncer>
- [8] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/01/22/flint-water-lead-poison-michigan-health-column/79019134/>
- [9] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/10/02/air-pollution-killing-millions-not-united-states-america-11908>
- [10] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/08/02/california-repudiates-erin-brockovich-hexavalent-chromium-11644>
- [11] <https://www.marchforscience.com/wildfires>
- [12] <https://crosscut.com/2016/07/con-timber-does-washington-good>
- [13] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/01/26/dont-let-partisans-hijack-science-march-10777>