



# Good Natured Comedy for Climate Communication

*Drawdown, Act Up!*

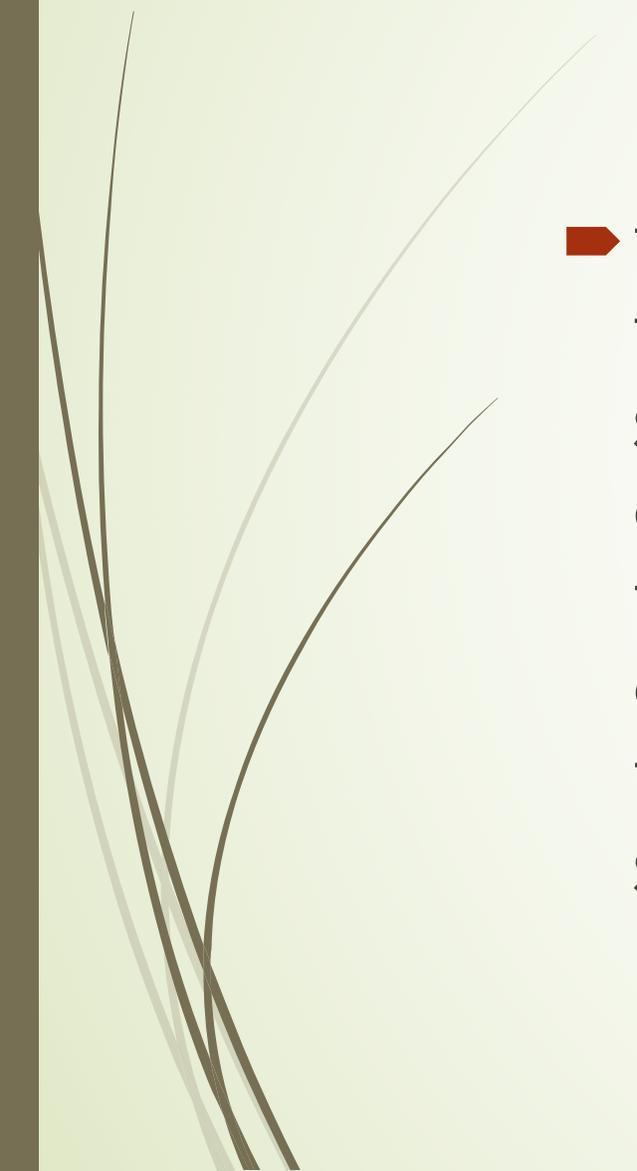
Beth Osnes, PhD Associate Professor of Theatre and Environmental Studies

University of Colorado, Boulder

Co-director of Inside the Greenhouse, an initiative for creative climate communication



## Purpose of this project:

- ▶ to explore if the use of good-natured comedy for climate communication helps students sustain hope and effectively communicate climate solutions. This project seeks to diversify the modes of comedy that can be used in climate communication beyond satire to others that are possibly more hopeful and supportive of sustained engagement and action.
- 



# What is good natured comedy?

- ▶ -an intended double meaning
- ▶ -connotes both a mode of comedy that is good for nature, and also good-natured, meaning kind in intent—not seeking to shame or expose in a cruel or demeaning manner
- ▶ ‘Good’ as an adjective also implies that environmental comedy needs to be of superior quality in order to be effective. The comedy needs to be able to float to be funny, meaning that it needs to be unencumbered by excessive environmental messaging
- ▶ Describing comedy as ‘natured’ also situates it in the phenomena of the physical world: as embodied, and as part of the Earth. It gets us out of our merely intellectual mode—where verbal forms of comedy (such as satire) largely reside—and into our physical bodies through which we both experience and impact the environment.

# DRAWDOWN

# ACT UP!

‘Drawdown’ carbon to reverse global warming

‘Act Up’ through **interactive games and skits**  
to activate top solutions



**-Fall 2017 Course--Freshman seminar,**

**Comedy Matters:** To explore the nature, place, and function of comedy within society and the meaningful role comedy can play in communicating climate solutions

**-Spring 2018 Course-- ENVS Juniors and Seniors, Creative Climate Communication:**

To generate multimodal creative compositions on the subject of climate change

**-Spring 2019 Young Women's Voice for**

**Climate-SPEAK:** an after school group for young women in Boulder, CO working towards vocal empowerment on issues of climate

# Partners for Drawdown Act Up

- Drawdown
- National Park Service- Climate Change Response Team
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- CIRES Ed. & Outreach
- SPEAK

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

**DRAWDOWN**

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN EVER PROPOSED TO  
REVERSE GLOBAL WARMING  
EDITED BY PAUL HAWKEN





# Research shows that when communicating climate solutions:

- Keep it local- framing at the city/community level
- Appeal to people's already held values
- Focus on a single issue
- Emphasize the positive
- Identify co-benefits to climate and energy solutions
- Frame the solution as an opportunity
- \*Markowitz, Ezra, Caroline Hodge, and Gabriel Harp. 2014. *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*. New York: Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University.

Rank	Solution	Sector	TOTAL ATMOSPHERIC CO2-EQ REDUCTION (GT)	NET COST (BILLIONS US \$)	SAVINGS (BILLIONS US \$)
1	<a href="#">Refrigerant Management</a>	Materials	89.74	N/A	\$-902.77
2	<a href="#">Wind Turbines (Onshore)</a>	Electricity Generation	84.60	\$1,225.37	\$7,425.00
3	<a href="#">Reduced Food Waste</a>	Food	70.53	N/A	N/A
4	<a href="#">Plant-Rich Diet</a>	Food	66.11	N/A	N/A
5	<a href="#">Tropical Forests</a>	Land Use	61.23	N/A	N/A
6	<a href="#">Educating Girls</a>	Women and Girls	51.48	N/A	N/A
7	<a href="#">Family Planning</a>	Women and Girls	51.48	N/A	N/A
8	<a href="#">Solar Farms</a>	Electricity Generation	36.90	\$-80.60	\$5,023.84
9	<a href="#">Silvopasture</a>	Food	31.19	\$41.59	\$699.37
10	<a href="#">Rooftop Solar</a>	Electricity Generation	24.60	\$453.14	\$3,457.63
11	<a href="#">Regenerative Agriculture</a>	Food	23.15	\$57.22	\$1,928.10
12	<a href="#">Temperate Forests</a>	Land Use	22.61	N/A	N/A
13	<a href="#">Peatlands</a>	Land Use	21.57	N/A	N/A
14	<a href="#">Tropical Staple Trees</a>	Food	20.19	\$120.07	\$626.97
15	<a href="#">Afforestation</a>	Land Use	18.06	\$29.44	\$392.33
16	<a href="#">Conservation Agriculture</a>	Food	17.35	\$37.53	\$2,119.07

# What's So Funny?

- ▶ -fully committing
- ▶ -exaggeration
- ▶ -introducing one ridiculous idea into an otherwise logical world
- ▶ -surprise
- ▶ -clever recognition of a truth
- ▶ -anthropomorphizing ideas, forces, natural objects, animals...
- ▶ -imitation (such as the human being mechanical or the mechanical being human)
- ▶ -when absurdism seems more logical than logic
- ▶ -sexual innuendo
- ▶ -scatology
- ▶ -specificity in detail, not vague notions
- ▶ -the body, its involuntary sounds, smells, protrusions, foibles, and failures
- ▶ -honesty
- ▶ -social inversion
- ▶ -word play
- ▶ -timing
- ▶ -failing



Double P.  
(Pod of Peas)

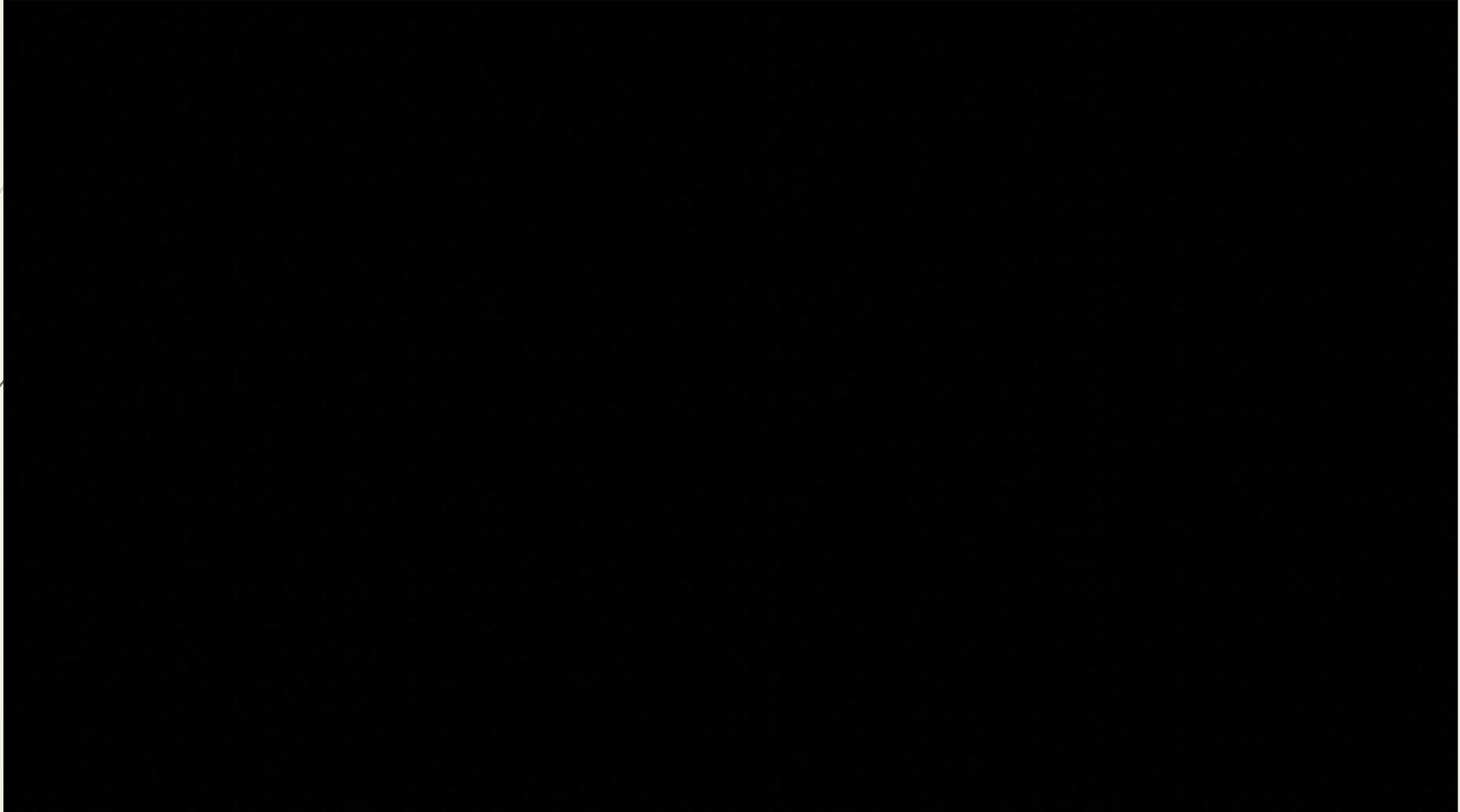
Narrator

Da  
Carrot

Subuch

# Plant-rich Diet Solutions #4

## The Omnivore Game

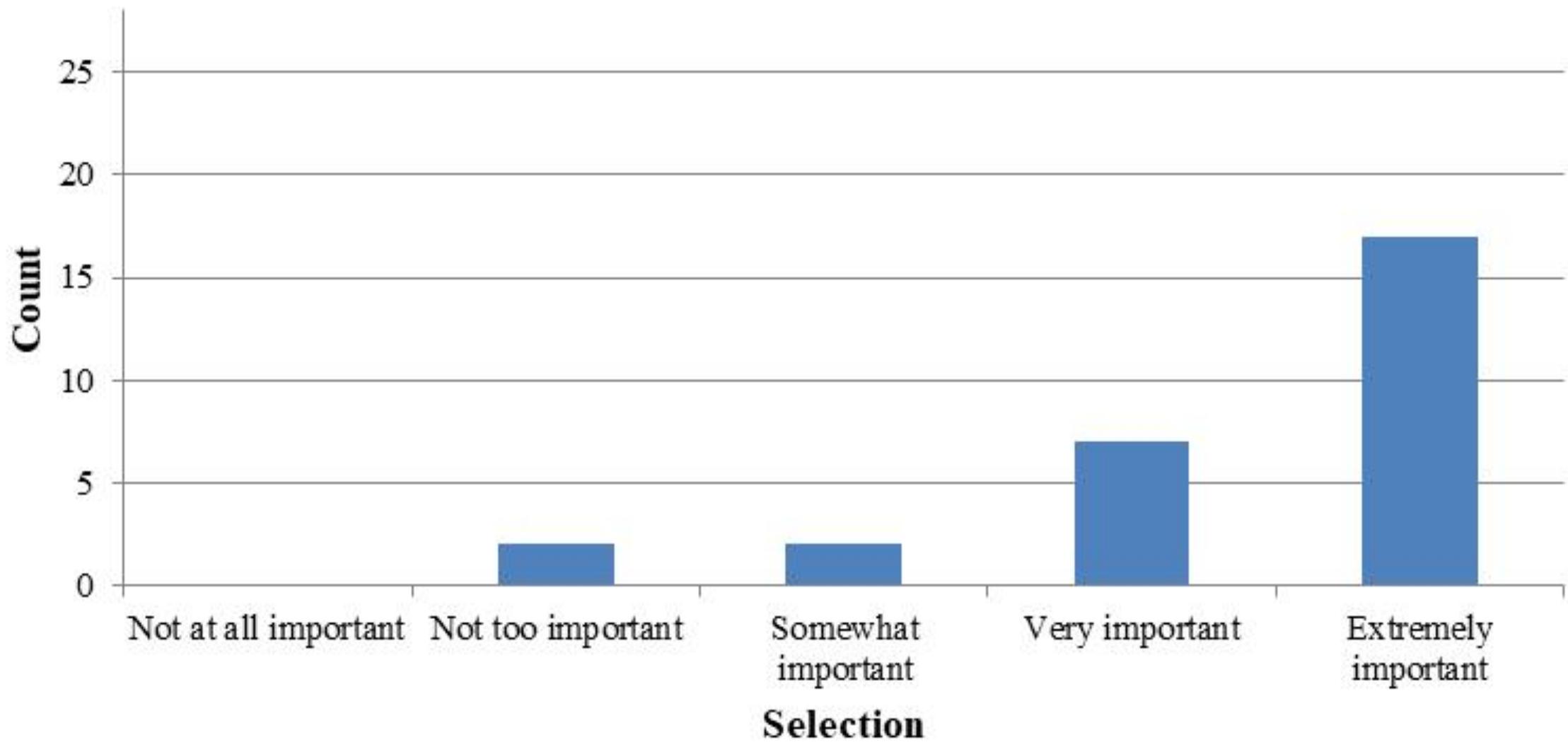


# Girls Education Solution #6

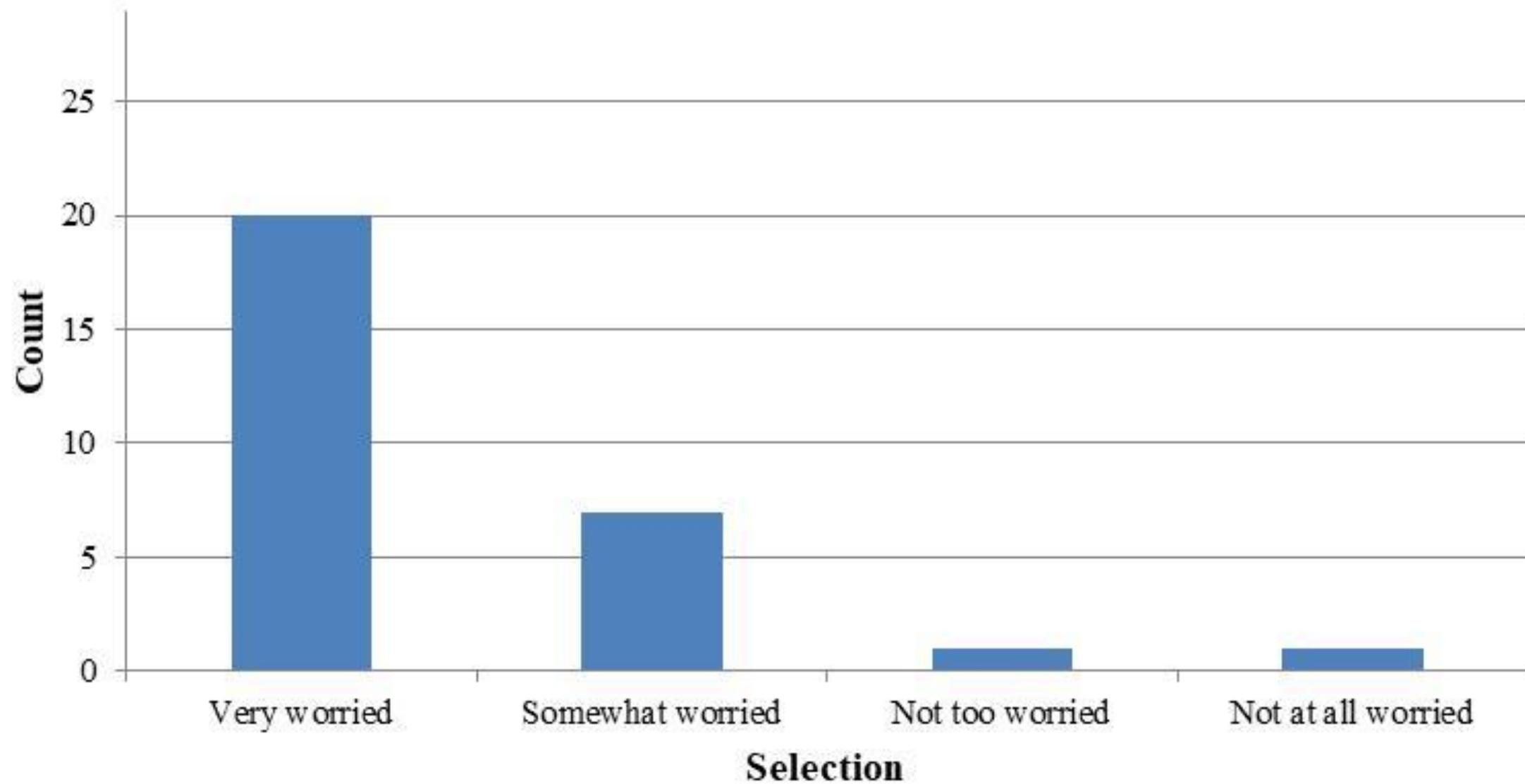
## Turning Over the Tarp



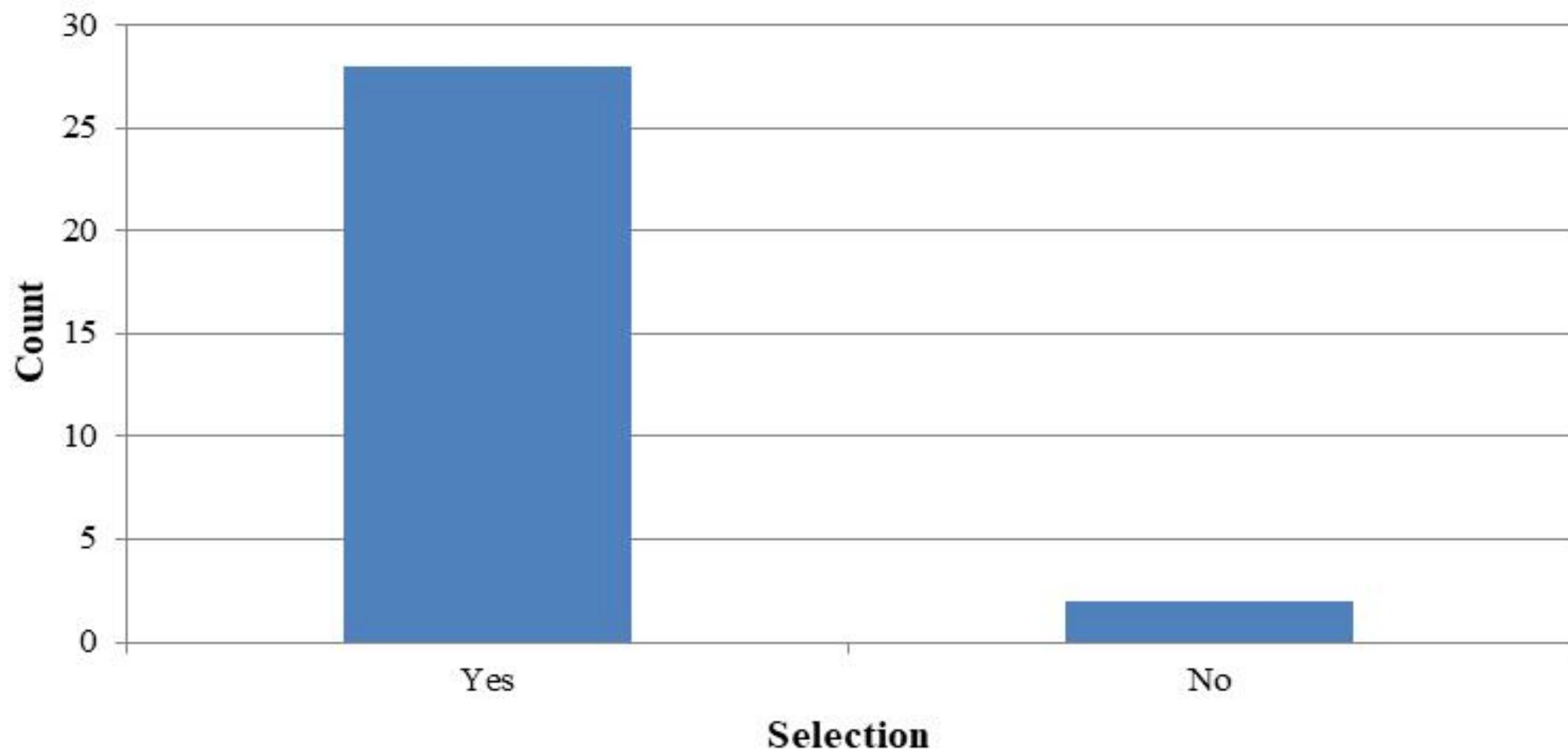
# How important is the issue of global warming to you personally? (n=28)



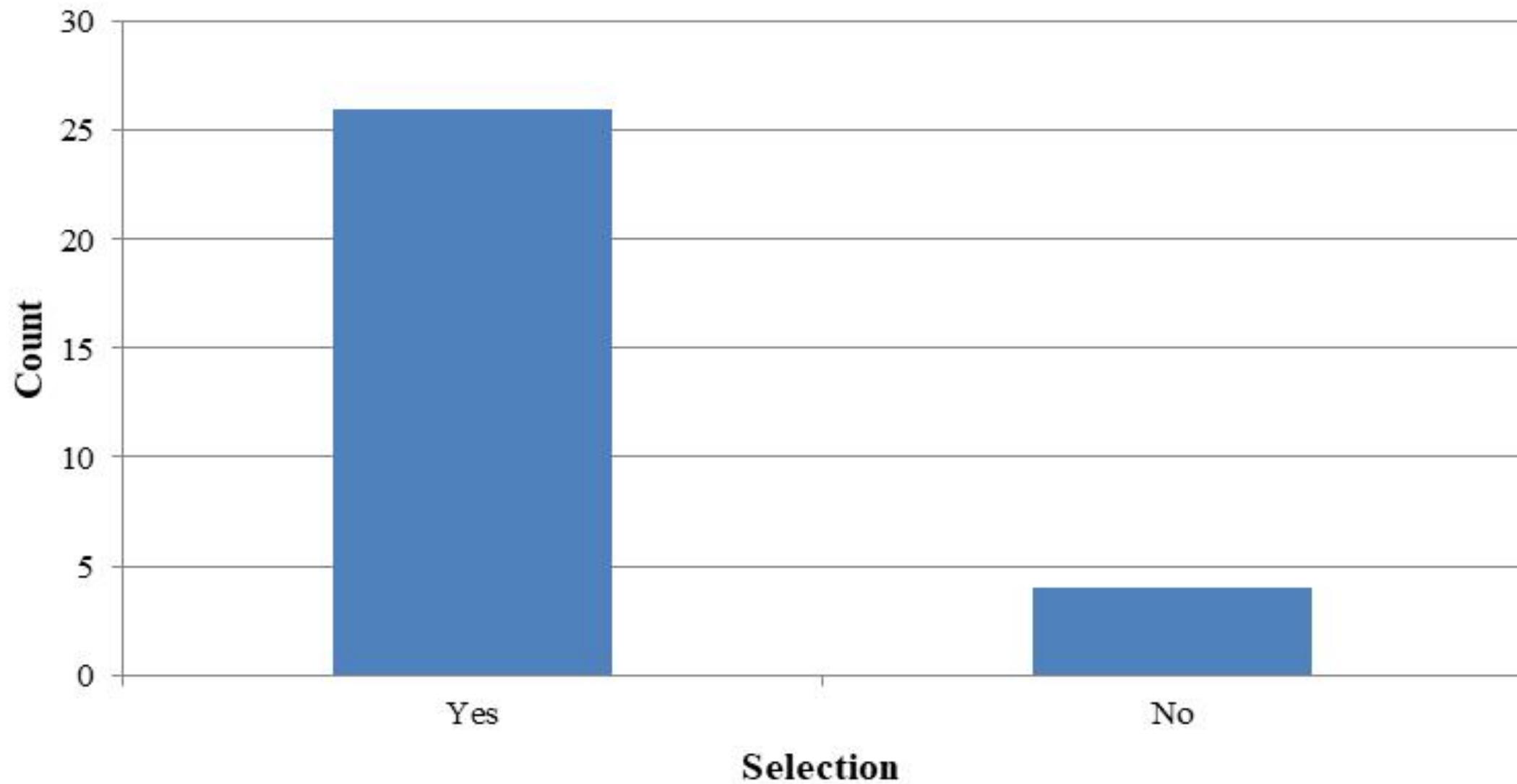
# How worried are you about about global warming? (n=29)



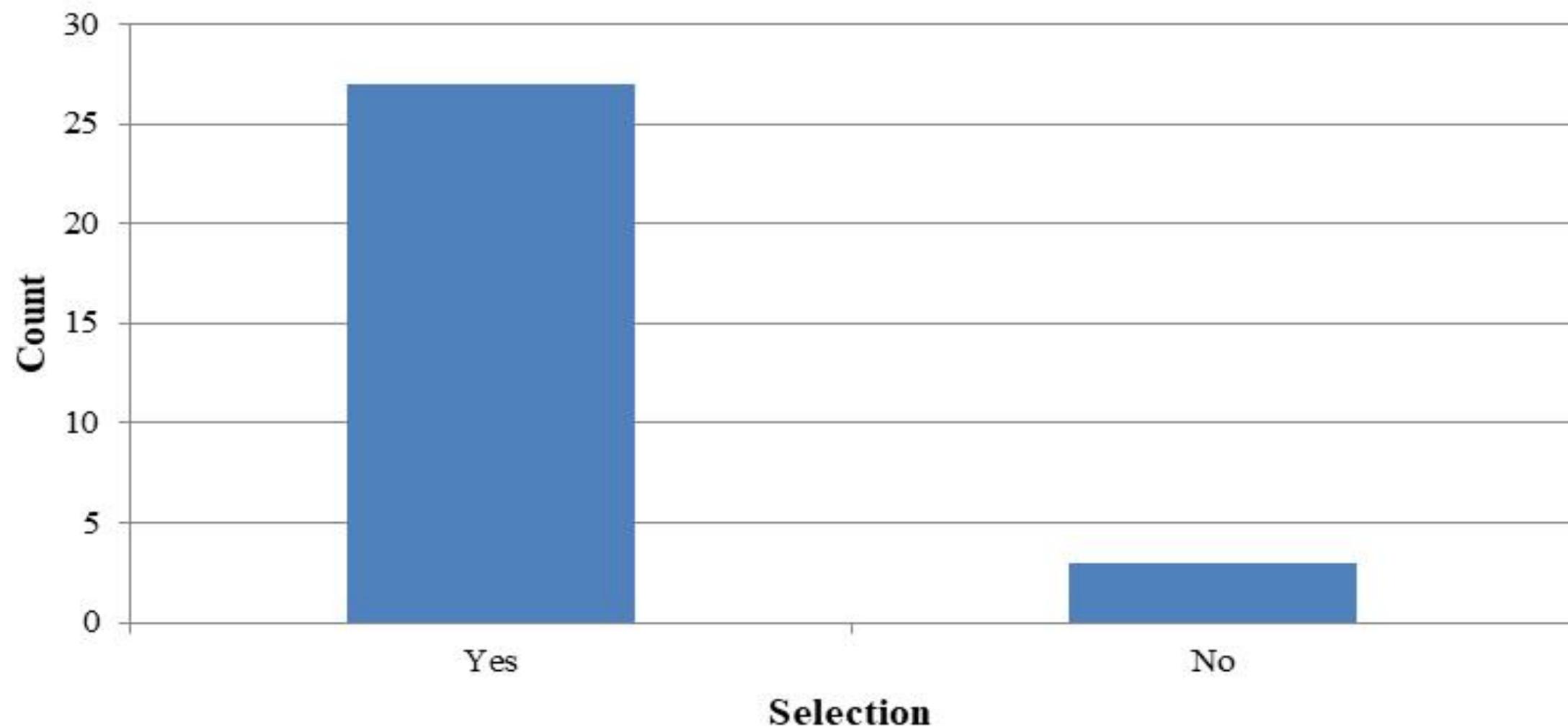
**Did creatively communicating an embodied activity and skit  
for youth visiting Rocky Mountain National  
Park advance you as an effective climate communicator?  
(n=30)**



**Do you feel more confident to do a similar type of project in the future?  
(n=30)**

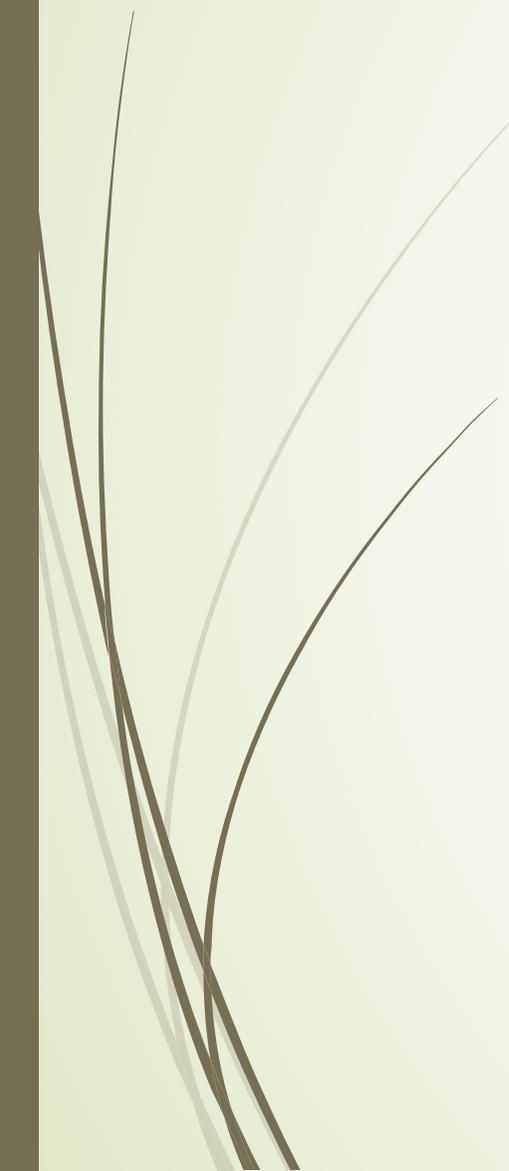


**Can you identify any approaches or techniques you developed while doing this composition that helped you succeed?**  
**(n=30)**

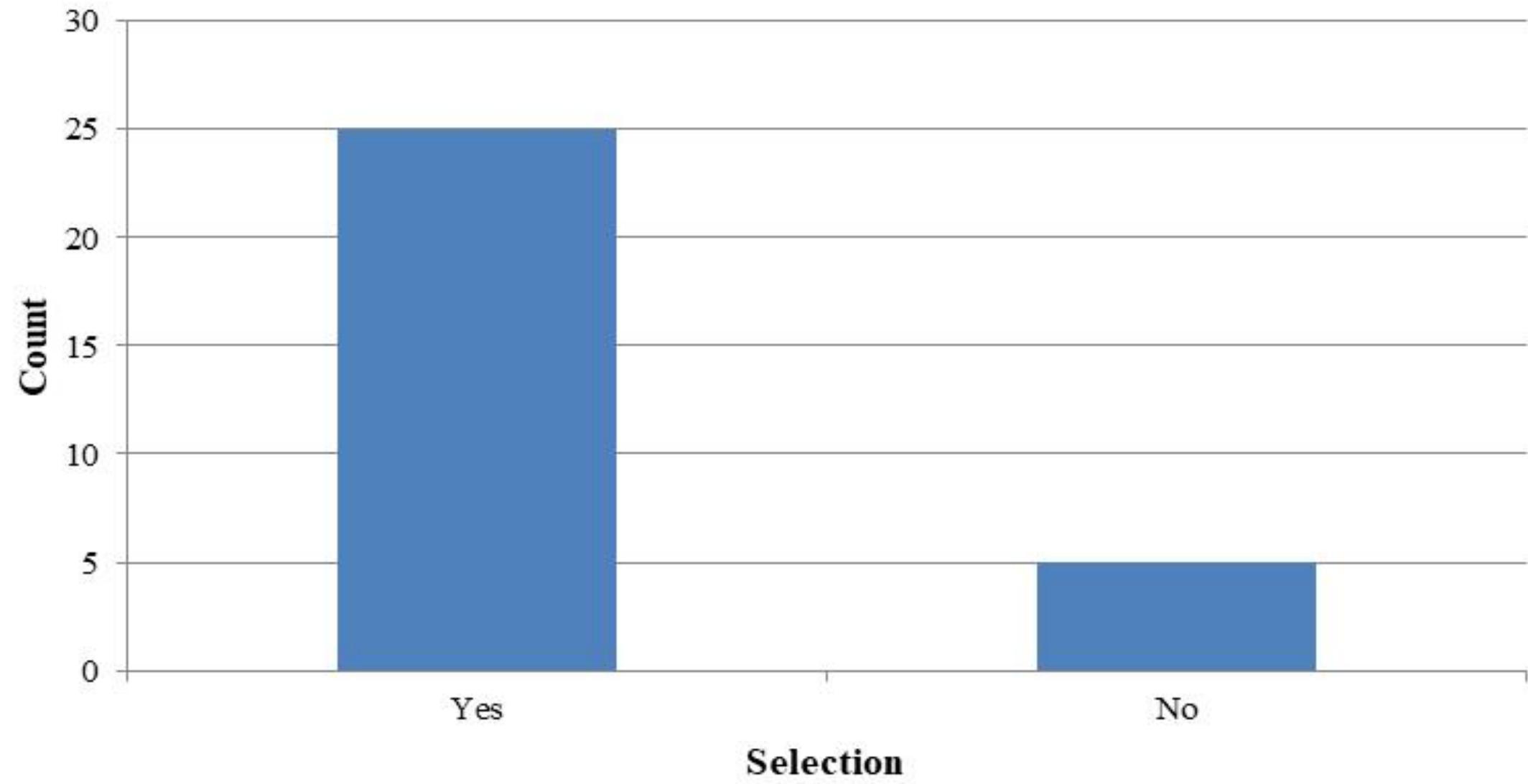




# Commonly mentioned approaches or techniques:

- Identifying with the audience
  - Use of humor
  - Thorough research to feed creativity
  - Working as a team
  - Mixing fun with education
  - Interacting with the audience
- 

**Does the experience of joy and/or fun increase your ability to sustain your commitment to climate change action?  
(n=30)**



- 
- *It keeps things fresh and exciting.*
  - *Fun or not, I think a person is either dedicated to climate change, or they are not.*
  - *The usual dark message of climate change really takes its toll and gives the feeling of "why even try." So fun is great in encouraging healthy, sustainable living in a way that enjoyable.*
  - *Yes, because it allows me to see climate change in a more positive way.*



# Rocky Mountain National Park Discovery Days July 2018

# DRAWDOWN

## ACT UP!

'Drawdown' carbon to reverse global warming

'Act Up' through **interactive games and skits**  
to activate top solutions

Learn the science behind the solutions  
and how to activate these in your daily life

July 10 & 11, 2018

Rocky Mountain National Park  
Discovery Day  
at the Moraine Park Discovery Center

July 10: 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30

July 11: 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30

Second floor, proceed to the alcove, and to field outside  
(40 minutes long—come & go as you like)

### DRAWDOWN'S TOP 20 SOLUTIONS

*The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*

- |                           |                             |  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 Refrigerant Management  | 8 Solar Farms               | 15 Afforestation                                       |
| 2 Wind Turbines (Onshore) | 9 Silvopasture              | 16 Conservation Agriculture                            |
| 3 Reduced Food Waste      | 10 Rooftop Solar            | 17 Tree Intercropping                                  |
| 4 Plant-Rich Diet         | 11 Regenerative Agriculture | 18 Geothermal  |
| 5 Tropical Forests        | 12 Temperate Forests        | 19 Managed Grazing                                     |
| 6 Educating Girls         | 13 Peatlands                | 20 Nuclear   |
| 7 Family Planning         | 14 Tropical Staple Trees    | <a href="http://www.drawdown.org">www.drawdown.org</a> |

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University of Colorado  
Boulder

CENTER FOR  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
POLICY RESEARCH









# Lettuce Plan A Head

➤ <https://vimeo.com/291062881/f10f1f0436>



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### INTEGRATED

into curriculum for  
2 semesters at  
CU Boulder



### PILOTED

with students at  
Rocky Mountain  
National Park

## STAY TUNED FOR "DRAWDOWN, STAND UP!"

A fun night of stand up and sketch comedy\*  
centered on Drawdown solutions



Spring 2019 class project for CU's 'Creative  
Climate Communication'

*\*see Boykoff & Osnes "A Laughing Matter? Confronting  
climate change through humor" (Political Geography 2018)*



For more information, contact Beth Osnes at [beth.osnes@colorado.edu](mailto:beth.osnes@colorado.edu)  
Professor of Theatre and Environmental Studies, CU Boulder  
Co-founder (with Max Boykoff and Rebecca Safran) of  
**Inside the Greenhouse** [www.insidethegreenhouse.org](http://www.insidethegreenhouse.org)

# Drawdown Learn Conference

## October 19-21. 2018

## Omega Institute, New York

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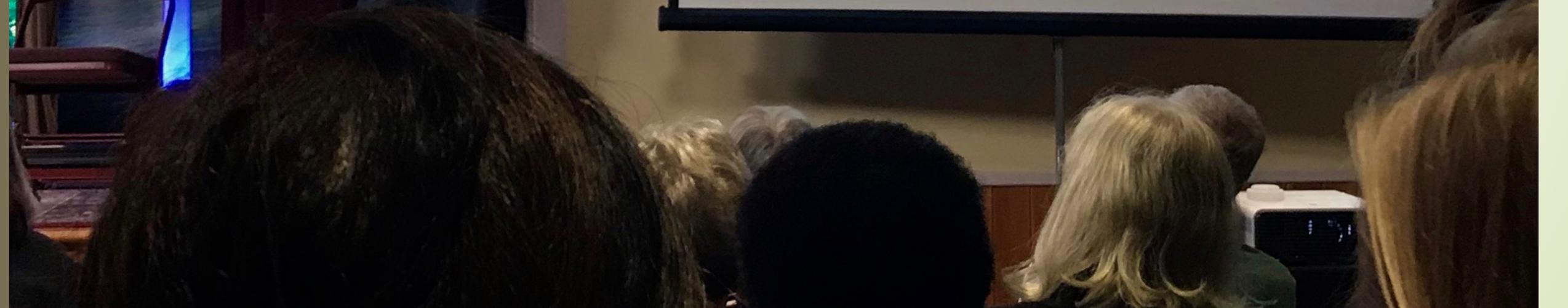
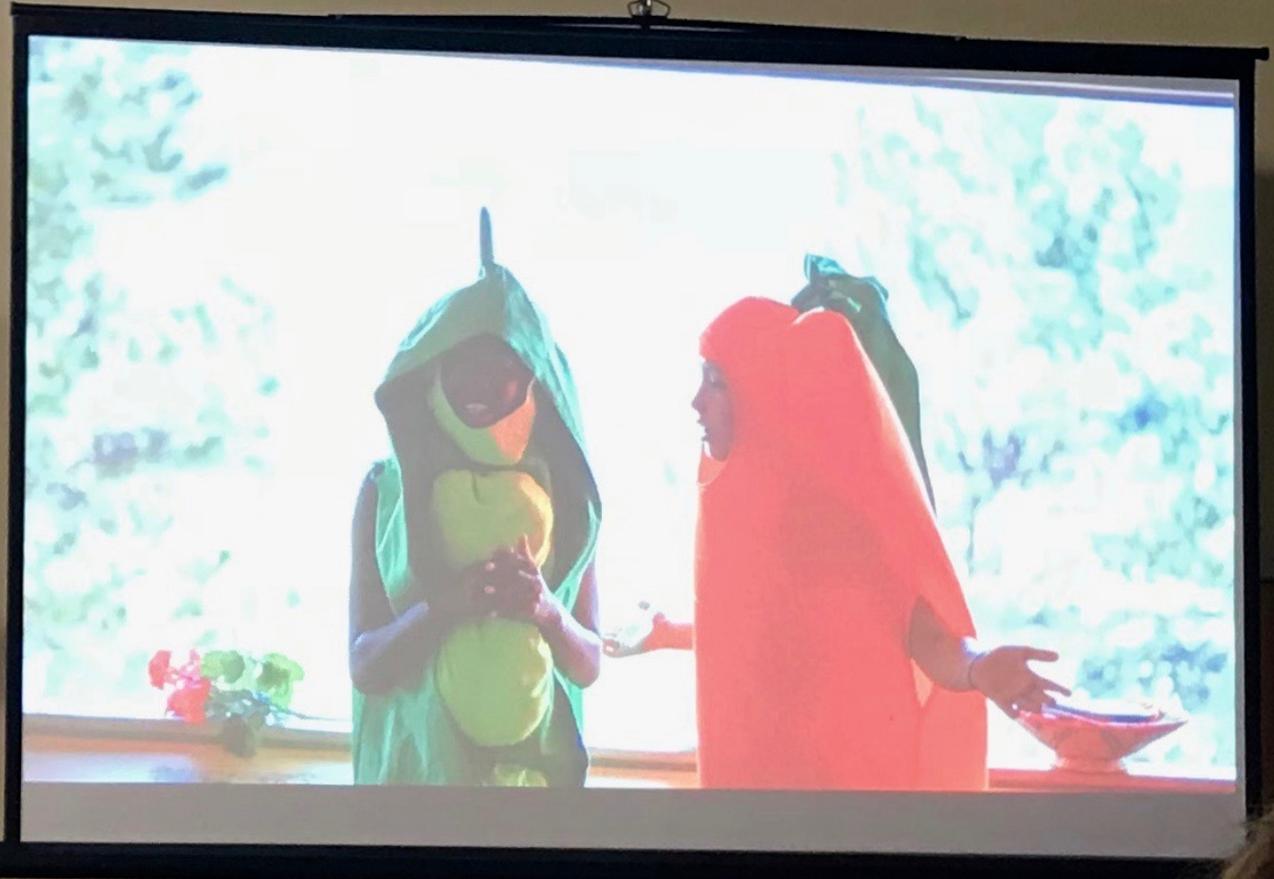


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POLICY RESEARCH



DRAWDOWN  
LEARN



FAMILY  
DAYS

FREE FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

# CU Museum of Natural History March 15, 2019 *Good Natured Fun with Drawdown, Act Up!*



# EVENTS



Museum of Natural History  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

# Lessons Learned & Recommendations:



insidethegreenhouse.org

vietnamese wat... Opinion | Fixing... United Airlines -... RTD | Route AB/... A Theory of Cli... https://sciencep... First-Year Semi... Seeking Applica... Inside the Gree...

About Creative Works Workshops Curricula Events & News Research Shine Awards GIVE NOW

INSIDE THE GREENHOUSE | Re-telling climate change stories

# COMEDY

*for Climate Change*

## 2019 ITG Comedy & Climate Change Short Video Competition

Application details for the 4th annual competition

Read More



Spring 2019  
Drawdown, *Stand Up!*

### Inside the Greenhouse

at University of Colorac  
We work to deepen our und



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

## Political Geography

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/polgeo](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/polgeo)



## A Laughing Matter? Confronting climate change through humor

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