

Dr. Denise Blanchard-Boehm

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The Dust Bowl of the 1930s: Lessons Learned the Hard Way in Environmental and Land Management



Abstract: Dust storms terrorized the High Plains in the 1930s, the deepest years of America's worst economic Depression. The inhabitants of the Panhandle of Texas, as well as those in Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Colorado were deeply affected by this incredible phenomenon which is now known as, "The Dust Bowl." This presentation revisits those years and discusses the forces in climatology and physical geography that caused the storms, as well as how the settlers on the plains contributed to the disaster unknowingly, through inappropriate and devastating land management practices. You will also learn how the people dealt with the fear and dust that placed their lives at risk. I plan to ask the students, "Could this environmental disaster ever happen again: why, or why not?"

Biography: Dr. Denise Blanchard-Boehm, Professor of Geography at Texas State University, specializes in Risk Communication, Natural and Environmental Hazards, Emergency Management and Risk Assessment, Historical Geography, Economic Geography, and Research Design and Methods.

In 2004, Dr. Blanchard received the "Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award" from the National Council for Geographic Education. In 2005, Dr. Blanchard was a nominee for the "Mariel M. Muir, Excellence in Mentoring Award," at Texas State University. From 2005 to 2007, Dr. Blanchard was Director for the James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research, and is currently a Distinguished Scholar with the Center. Dr. Blanchard has taught and/or developed more than 25 different courses in the Department of Geography, and published 20+ articles and reports in her research field.

Dr. Blanchard has traveled extensively all over the world, exploring the countries of: Australia, Botswana, Cambodia, Chile, (Chile, Easter Island), China (including, Hong Kong), Cook Islands (Rarotonga), Egypt, England, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Turkey, Scotland, Seychelles Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and Zimbabwe. She has also traveled extensively across the United States, including Puerto Rico.

Dr. Blanchard received her Ph.D. degree in Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder, her Masters of Science Degree in Economics at Florida State University, and Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration, specializing in Finance, at Auburn University.