The Center for Water and the Environment (CWE) hosts Dr. Wil Burns to talk about Into the Great Wide Open: The Potential Promise and Perils of Climate Geoengineering. The Paris Agreement put the world on course for temperature increases of 2.6-3.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100. With temperatures projected to continue to rise for centuries after emissions are stabilized, this could have disastrous consequences for human institutions and natural ecosystems. As a result, increasing attention has been devoted to climate engineering as a potential solution. Climate geoengineering involves large-scale engineering of our environment in order to combat or counteract the effects of changes in atmospheric chemistry.

These methods include ocean iron fertilization, marine cloud albedo enhancement, stratospheric sulfate injection, bioenergy and carbon capture and storage, and direct air capture. While these schemes could help the world combat climate change, they could also have serious negative ramifications, including disruption of monsoonal cycles, depletion of the ozone layer, alteration of marine ecosystems and threats to food security and critical water resources. Dr. Burns will present some of the most widely discussed climate geoengineering options, weigh the potential risks of those options, and explore the governance of such technologies.

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