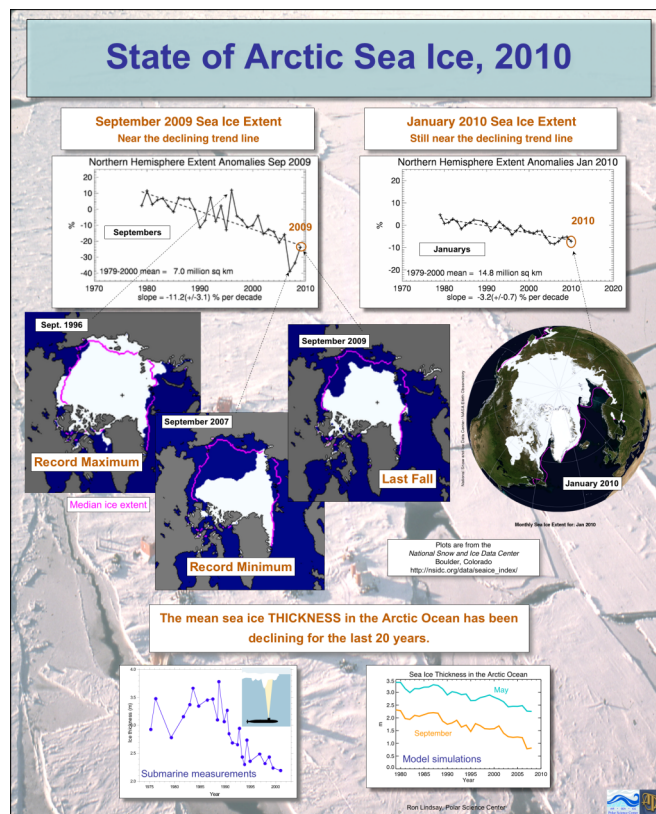


Sea Ice Outlook for September 2010 from the Polar Science Weekend

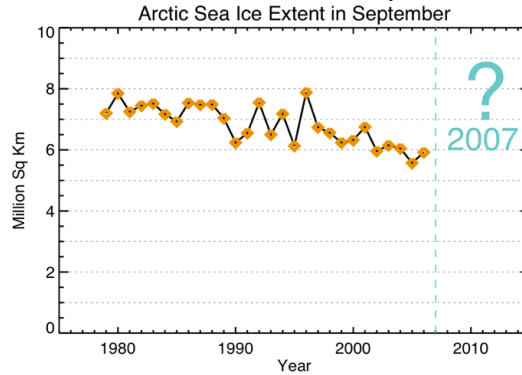
The Polar Science Weekend is an annual event at the Seattle Pacific Science Center organized by the Pacific Science Center and the University of Washington Polar Science Center. 15 to 20 displays are created by various groups in the Seattle area to engage the general public in an outreach effort (<http://psc.apl.washington.edu/psw/> ... don't miss the photo album). Several thousand visitors visit the Science Center during our four-day event. This year the event took place from February 25th to the 28th. In order to stimulate discussions with the public about sea ice, how it has a strong annual cycle, and how the summer minimum has a strong downward trend, a small activity was organized to allow members of the public to consider sea ice extent and guess at the magnitude of the extent this next September. Maps of the ice extent last September and January were displayed. This poster was a good starting point for discussions:



Members of the public were invited to make a prediction for next September in a two step process, first a practice prediction was made for 2007 using this graph:

Practice Prediction

What's YOUR Sea Ice Prediction for September 2007?

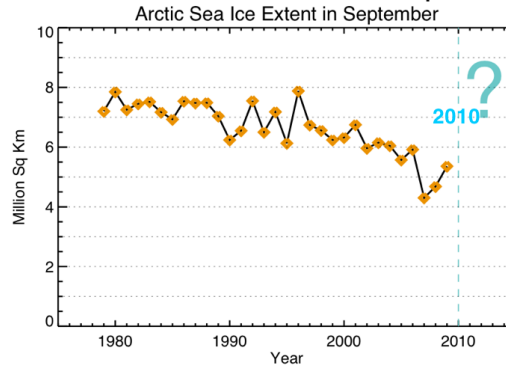


How many million square kilometers were there in September 2007? _____

and of course we could show them the actual answer in the display maps. Then they were offered a chance to guess for 2010 using this ballot:

Prediction Ballot

What's YOUR Sea Ice Prediction for next September?



How many million square kilometers will there be September 2010? _____

They were then given a card with the 2010 ballot where they could write their guess and a web site address as provided where they can check in the fall to see what actually happened.

Results:

We had a total of **N = 60** guesses from about 6 hours of discussions.

The mean was 5.11 million sq km and the standard deviation was 2.15 million sq km. The mean is quite near that predicted by the trend line (5.15 +/- 0.57 million sq km) but the spread is greater.

The best part of the exercise was the opportunity to engage a number of people in interesting discussions about the fate of sea ice in a changing climate.