# A Petrocollapse Timeline

Contributed by Albert Bates
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Since the early two thousand oughts we pessimistas have been trying to discern the shape of the backside of Mr. Hubbert's curve. John Michael Greer has made a strong case for catabolic collapse, which could be described as a stair-step down from the present peak, punctuated by precipitous drops (the 147-dollar oil spike; the Lehman default; the ARMs race) and level treads ("Green Shoots," the "Morning in America" phase we are currently re-hallucinating).

Catabolic collapse may describe the micro-view, but in coming decades the decline curve has a number, and whether that number is 2 (the grade of the uphill climb we traversed over the past 100 years) or 7 (halving every ten years) matters.

At the Local Futures conference in Michigan on November 14, Richard Douthwaite joined others, myself included, in predicting something in the 7 to 9 range, which places him in the pessimista camp, whether he likes the association or not. A splendid analysis published November 23 at the Oil Drum by Tony "ace" Erikson follows a more benign 3 degree slope (1.6 to 2.4 mbd/a), and offers a very nifty view of the next few years. I have taken the liberty of combining ace's charts with an overlaying fabric of possible socio-political reactions.

Here is the projected decline slope, derived by subtracting new supplies now being developed from anticipated depletion of existing supply, with an overlay of expected prices:

Here is the projection of just the new additions, which typically take 8 to 10 years to develop after discovery, assuming the product price justifies the expense to develop (which it does in this case), together with a possible socio-political overlay for the United States.

Going by these charts it is safe to say that the next few years should be very lively. Stick around.

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Albert Bates is author of The Post-Petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook and founder of Global Village Institute for Appropriate Technology. When not inventing fuel wringers for algae or pyrolizing cookstoves, he teaches permaculture, village design and natural building. Albert blogs at peaksurfer.blogspot.com.

Further Reading:

"Our Post-Peak Oil Future"

Jan Lundberg versus John Michael Greer re collapse scenario