Are glaciers growing or retreating?

What The Science Says:
Most glaciers are retreating, posing a serious problem for millions who rely on glaciers for water.

Climate Myth: Glaciers are growing
“[R]eports are coming in from all over the world: for the first time in over 250 years, glaciers in Alaska, Canada, New Zealand, Greenland, and now Norway are growing.”(JamulBlog)

Although Glaciologists measure year-to-year changes in glacier activity, it is the long term changes which provide the basis for statements such as "Global Glacier Recession Continues". Some Skeptics confuse these issues by cherry picking individual glaciers or by ignoring long term trends. Diversions such as these do not address the most important question of what is the real state of glaciers globally?

The answer is not only clear but it is definitive and based on the scientific literature. Globally glaciers are losing ice at an extensive rate (Figure 1). There are still situations in which glaciers gain or lose ice more than typical for one region or another but the long term trends are all the same, and about 90% of glaciers are shrinking worldwide (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Long-term changes in glacier volume adapted from Cogley 2009.
This is a related lecture-video from Denial101x - Making Sense of Climate Science Denial
Skeptical Science explains the science of global warming and examines climate misinformation through the lens of peer-reviewed research. The website won the Australian Museum 2011 Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge. Members of the Skeptical Science team have authored peer-reviewed papers, a college textbook on climate change and the book *Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand*. Skeptical Science content has been used in university courses, textbooks, government reports on climate change, television documentaries and numerous books.

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