



Contact: Jana Goldman  
301-734-1123

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Nov. 17, 2008

**Scientific Assessment Finds Expanding Use of Climate Forecasts  
Could Mean Better Water Management**

Expanding the use of seasonal to interannual climate forecasts, especially in drought-prone and semi-arid parts of the United States, can assist decision makers in the management of water resources, according to a new NOAA-led scientific assessment. The assessment is one in a series of synthesis and assessment reports coordinated by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program.

“Reducing our vulnerability to changes in climate depends upon our ability to bridge the gap between climate science and using that scientific understanding in our management of critical resources,” said Helen Ingram, lead author, and a research fellow at the University of Arizona. “For instance, our water resources depend on how much rain and snow we get. Climate forecasts can help us plan how we store and use our water.”

The report focuses on expanding the use of climate forecasts which are now used by a small number of decision makers. Through closer cooperation between climate scientists and water resources managers, these forecasts can become more useful to a wider group of decision makers.

There has been some success in using seasonal and yearly climate information already, according to the report, such as managing Lake Okeechobee in Florida, running Seattle’s public utilities, and water and wildfire planning in the West. But the report also notes that this success can be expanded by building more credibility, legitimacy, and trust of climate forecasts.

The report also suggests a better balance between physical science and social science research to improve decision support; improving climate and hydrological forecasts; and enhanced monitoring to strengthen links between climate and hydrologic forecasts.

The Climate Change Science Program report, *Decision Support Experiments and Evaluations Using Seasonal to Interannual Forecasts and Observational Data: A Focus on Water Resources*, and a summary brochure are available online at <http://www.climatescience.gov>.