

### 9 | Communications

In its Strategic Plan, CCSP identified communications as one of four core approaches for achieving its five overarching scientific goals. CCSP is committed to communicating with interested partners in the United States and throughout the world, and to learning from these partners on a continuing basis. As an essential part of its mission, CCSP stresses openness and transparency in its findings and reports.

The Communications Interagency Working Group (CIWG), established during FY 2004, develops and executes an implementation plan each year that focuses on disseminating the results of CCSP activities credibly and effectively and making CCSP science findings and products easily available to a diverse set of audiences. Elements of the implementation plan for calendar year 2008 include:

- *Media Relations* – When requested by the CCSP Director, assist in communicating on matters relating to climate science.
- *Public Outreach* – Develop materials and methods for public outreach on issues related to climate science and the activities and products of CCSP.
- *Web Sites* – Develop and advance a strategy for improving,

integrating, and promoting the content of web sites operated or supported by CCSP and its participating agencies, recognizing that the sites are essential communication and outreach tools.

The elements and strategies described above are exercised in the launch of the CCSP Synthesis and Assessment Products (SAPs) listed on page 29 of this report. When the final products are released, the teams associated with each SAP may request the CIWG's assistance in generating outreach products or activities via the lead agency and the lead agency's representative to the CIWG. These products and activities may include:

- Constituent briefings
- Web links posted on participating agency and CCSP home pages
- Press releases
- Public comments package posted on web sites
- Fact sheets
- Scientific posters.

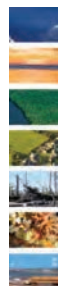
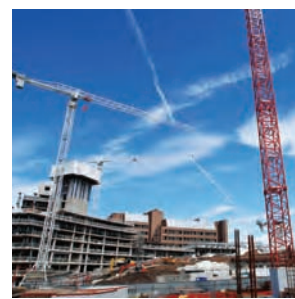
Agencies represented on the CIWG incorporate the results of SAPs into their outreach and education materials. For example, EPA includes key summary information from SAP 1.1 on its climate change web site (see <epa.gov/climatechange/science/recenttc.html#recent>).

The Climate Change Science Program Office (CCSPO), funded and supervised by the agencies and departments participating in CCSP, supports the program's communications goals, along with members of the CIWG. CCSPO assists CIWG, coordinates preparation of the annual *Our Changing Planet* report to Congress as well as other reports, and is responsible for managing the program's interagency web sites.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Listed below are highlights of recent communication activities coordinated at the interagency level (as of 30 June 2008):

- Published and distributed (in both hardcopy and online) the FY 2008 edition of *Our Changing Planet*, the program's annual report to Congress and the President.
- Produced and distributed an additional six SAP final reports, including a series of briefings and other activities focused on communicating the report findings:
  - SAP 2.2: *North American Carbon Budget and Implications for the Global Carbon Cycle* (November 2007)
  - SAP 3.3: *Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate: Regions of Focus - North America, Hawaii, Caribbean, and U.S. Pacific Islands* (June 2008)
  - SAP 4.3: *The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity* (May 2008)
  - SAP 4.4: *Preliminary Review of Adaptation Options for Climate-Sensitive Ecosystems and Resources* (June 2008)
  - SAP 4.5: *Effects of Climate Change on Energy Production and Use in the United States* (October 2007)
  - SAP 4.7: *Impacts of Climate Variability and Change on Transportation Systems and Infrastructure: Gulf Coast Study* (March 2008)
- Posted on-line drafts of SAP reports for public comment. All submitted public comments also were posted, along with the authors' responses.
- Posted peer review comments on draft SAP reports, along with the authors' responses.
- Advisory committees for many of the SAPs convened public meetings to discuss report drafts. All meetings were announced in the Federal Register.
- Solicited public comment on the summary of CCSP's *Revised Research Plan*. Launched in May 2008, this plan updates the CCSP Strategic Plan released in 2003.



## Highlights of Recent Research and Plans for FY 2009



- Facilitated stakeholder participation in the U.S. Government Review of draft documents of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Supported the dissemination of the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC, including respective working groups' Summary for Policymakers and the *Synthesis Report*.
- Managed and improved CCSP web sites, including web services to facilitate interagency collaboration.
- Managed the Global Change Research Information Office (GCRIIO) as mandated by the Global Change Research Act of 1990, including a catalog for requesting reports.
- Managed the Climate Change Technology Program (CCTP) public web site and provided additional services such as development and management of password-protected web sites and publications support.

Another important set of communication activities by CCSP agencies is a continuing series of workshops and conferences that have been instrumental in conveying recent scientific advances. They have also provided an opportunity for CCSP to better understand stakeholder needs, concerns, and recommendations, and have been used to obtain broad input into CCSP's ongoing strategic planning process, for example:

- *Coping with Climate Change: National Summit, 8-10 May 2007, Ann Arbor, Michigan* – Funded in part by EPA and NSF, the summit focused on four specific sectors that represent illustrative examples of the social, economic, environmental, and natural resource issues that are vulnerable to climate change: public health, the energy industry, water quality, and fisheries. The summit discussed general models for how different kinds of organizations, within these sectors and more generally, can put into place structures or processes that help them to anticipate and adapt to near- and long-term change.
- *Climate Information Users Roundtable, 10 October 2007, Washington, DC* – The purpose of the roundtable was for CCSP to gain insights from a range of stakeholders in order to help inform future program directions. Participants were asked to reflect on their expectations for and ideas about CCSP's role in providing climate information (see [climatescience.gov/Library/docs/ClimateInformationUsersRoundtable-FinalReport.pdf](http://climatescience.gov/Library/docs/ClimateInformationUsersRoundtable-FinalReport.pdf)).
- *Climate Information: Responding to User Needs, 22-23 October 2007, College Park, Maryland* – Funded in part by CCSP agencies, this event fostered dialog between the providers of climate information and its diverse user community to define specific measures needed to enhance data management, modeling, predictions in making climate-related decisions, and the use of climate observations. Providers learned how climate change affects users from different sectors of society, and what specific products they require. Users heard what other organizations are doing to prepare for climate change impacts and what types of information providers can produce now and in the future.

- *NOAA Data and Information for Climate Change: A Conference for Public and Private Sector Users, 5-6 November 2007, Asheville, North Carolina* – This conference focused on identifying recommendations from and requirements of the energy, insurance, and transportation sectors for data and information in a changing climate (see <noaadata.com>). The conference explored the challenges and opportunities that changing climate conditions present for businesses and state and local governments in these sectors; highlighted current scientific understanding of climate change within these sectors; and assessed the energy, insurance, and transportation sectors' emerging data and information needs to better respond to a changing climate.
- *Climate Change: Science and Solutions. National Council for Science and the Environment, 8th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment, 16-18 January 2008, Washington, DC* – Funded in part by seven CCSP agencies, this dialog with leading scientists, policymakers, industry leaders, educators, and other solutions-oriented innovators focused on developing comprehensive strategies for protecting people and the planet from the threat of climate change. A set of recommendations is forthcoming, based upon the discussions in dozens of skill-building workshops, targeted breakout sessions, plenary sessions, and symposia.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF PLANS FOR FY 2009

Listed below are some of the communications activities coordinated at the interagency level and planned for late FY 2008 (July to September 2008) and early FY 2009 (October 2008 to May 2009):

- Produce and distribute the balance of 13 SAP final reports (see page 29 for the breadth of topics to be addressed) and a Unified Synthesis Product that will consolidate key SAP findings, recent work of the IPCC, and new peer-reviewed regional climate impact assessment reports. CIWG will advise the lead agencies on communications-related issues including dissemination to appropriate stakeholders, briefings, press releases, and summaries for a range of audiences across different information media.
- Publish and distribute in hardcopy the CCSP *Revised Research Plan*, as specified in Section 104 of the Global Change Research Act of 1990.
- Publish and distribute the *Scientific Assessment of the Effects of Global Change on the United States* (released electronically on 29 May 2008) that addresses topics required in Section 106 of the Global Change Research Act of 1990, including a description of the trends in and projections of changes in the physical climate system, as well as impacts on social and natural adaptation options.
- Prepare and disseminate the FY 2010 edition of *Our Changing Planet*.
- Continue to improve and expand web sites by preparing and posting new content, improving web site usability and accessibility, and enhancing agency integration.

