



United States Global Change Research Program  
**National Climate Assessment**

## **The National Climate Assessment: Preparing the Nation for Change**

Thank you for your interest in the National Climate Assessment. This month, the NCA has been busy with several workshops, planning meetings, and the very important release of the first NCA Federal Register Notice. We hope you will read the newsletter and find out more about all of the recent progress of the NCA. If you would like to be on the newsletter mailing list, please go to:  
[http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001hBRxcr-C4qLf9s\\_\\_b0nwGg%3D%3D](http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001hBRxcr-C4qLf9s__b0nwGg%3D%3D).  
And as always, we ask you to pass this newsletter on to your networks and help the NCA engage more stakeholders in the assessment process.

### **NCA Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 2, September 14, 2010**

- **Now Available for Public Comment**
- **Draft Outline of Content for the Next National Climate Assessment Announced**
- **Defining the International Context for the NCA**
- **Workshop on Water Sector Assessment Needs**
- **Job Opportunities With the Assessment**

### **Now Available for Public Comment**

#### **National Assessment Objectives, Proposed Topics, and Next Steps**

On September 7, the National Climate Assessment kicked off its first round of public comments with the publication of a Federal Register Notice describing the objectives of the National Climate Assessment process, the proposed topics to be covered in the Assessment synthesis product due in June 2013, and the next steps in the process. The content of the notice is based on a strategic plan for the Assessment developed by the Interagency National Climate Assessment Task Force (INCA) in meetings and workshops held over the last six months.

More information about the Federal Register Notice and online submission of comments can be found at <http://globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/notices>. Comments are due by 11:59 P.M. EST on October 8, 2010.

At the end of the comment period, comments will be summarized and provided to the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) for the Assessment. These comments, along with those of the FAC, will be used to modify the proposed Assessment process, the draft strategic plan, the report outline and the associated work plans.

## **Draft Outline of Content for the Next National Climate Assessment Announced**

As part of its Federal Register Notice, The National Climate Assessment has published its proposed outline for the next NCA synthesis report, due in 2013. The draft outline for the NCA report includes the following sections:

I. Background and Context for the Process. This section includes the purpose, background, general scope for the NCA, and the methodological details for the Assessment process.

II. The Scientific Basis for Climate Change. This section includes what climate change is and what it means for the US, current observations of global change and projections of future changes, overview of research on human responses to climate change, interpreting the science, and uncertainty.

III. Sectors. This section of the report will contain information on the impacts of and responses to climate change in sectors. Current sectors under consideration include: natural environment, biological diversity, agriculture and forestry, land resources, water resources, marine resources, air quality, energy production and use, transportation, human health and welfare, and human social systems.

IV. Regions. This section of the report will contain information on the impacts of and responses to climate change in geographic regions. Current regions under consideration include those used in the 2009 Global Climate Change Impacts Report: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Great Plains, Southwest, Northwest, Alaska, Islands, and Coasts, and a new region, the Arctic.

V. Integrated, Cross-Sectoral Issues. This section of the report will include information on climate change impacts in specific, integrated issue areas. Topics under consideration include: water supply, energy, and agriculture; biogeochemical cycles; land use change, land cover, and human settlements; migratory species; tipping points, thresholds, and extreme events; ecosystem services; disaster, recovery, and risk management; and international context.

VI. Human Responses to Climate Change. This section of the report will describe human responses to climate change and will include case studies that explore adaptation, mitigation, and interactions and integration across adaptation and mitigation.

VII. Future Scientific and Societal Needs. This section of the report will contain information on science gap analysis for this round of assessment, priorities for climate science investments, and facilitating decisions related to climate impacts and responses.

VIII. Appendices. One or more appendices will provide further information about tools, methodologies, guidelines, and assumptions for the NCA.

For full details about the Objectives, Proposed Topics, and Next Steps for the NCA, please see the Federal Register Notice at <http://globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/notices>.

## **Defining the International Context for the NCA**

On August 11, 2010 Assessment staff hosted a workshop on potential topics for the international

portion of the National Climate Assessment, focusing on defining what is meant by "international context" for the Assessment. Attendees included approximately 30 people engaged in international issues at the federal level, both within and outside of the federal government. Participants discussed ways to address the interactions between the United States and other countries in the context of increasing climate stress, given the resources and personnel power of the NCA.

In his keynote address, Jonathan Pershing, Department of State, highlighted that the assessment is not just about describing impacts and adaptation, but it is also about global mitigation decisions and the policy implications of our climate choices. By linking with other international efforts, the U.S. can capitalize upon the opportunity to learn a great deal from the assessment, mitigation, and adaption efforts of other countries. Likewise, the U.S. Assessment process can provide opportunities to support global negotiations and adaptation efforts by allowing us to evaluate the implications of climate change on a wide range ecosystems and social contexts that have parallels around the globe.

Specific topics discussed included: understanding the significance of borders, regional concerns, and resources with the United State's neighbors; understanding how international events, activities and climate stresses elsewhere may contribute to vulnerabilities and opportunities in the United States; aligning the NCA process with IPCC, the Climate Action Report, and other national reporting to international bodies; identifying information needs associated with GHG management not currently addressed by other efforts; informing U.S. international adaptation and other climate-related development activities; documenting effectiveness of adaptation options; and meeting the global change information needs of the Department of State, USAID, and other departments and agencies.

A follow up meeting has already taken place, in which a smaller group of federal employees met to determine priority items to be further developed into a discussion paper for consideration by the larger NCA planning group.

### **Workshop on Water Sector Assessment Needs**

On September 2, 2010, Assessment staff conducted a session for the municipal water utility sector in Denver, Colorado. This program was sponsored by NOAA's Climate and Societal Impacts (CSI) Water Element, EPA's Office of Water and Office of Research and Development, and NASA Water Resources in partnership with the Water Research Foundation (WaterRF), and Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF). The program was hosted by Nancy Beller-Simms (NOAA) and was moderated by Kathy Jacobs (OSTP) and Anne Waple (NOAA), who also facilitated two breakout sessions.

The discussion covered a broad range of topics important to those in the water sector, including: engagement for small vs. large utilities; how to contact agencies at the state and local level; water partnerships and networks of use to the NCA; desired outcomes and predictions from the NCA for the water sector; adaptation and mitigation options available for utilities; and the necessary ingredients for a common climate information source to serve the water industry. Overall, the event resulted in very useful input for designing the engagement process for the water sector as well as identifying key water management indicators of concern.

The results of the workshop have been summarized in a meeting report document and will be used in the context of developing both the water sector Assessment components and to inform the approach to

other sectors and regions. For the full report of the meeting, please contact the Assessments Coordinator (sobrien@usgcrp.gov).

### **Job Opportunities With the Assessment**

The National Climate Assessment is currently advertising a job opening for a Climate Program Specialist I to assist with multiple management functions, including meeting planning, records management, document preparation, budgeting and scheduling of Assessment activities. This is a full time position located at the US Global Change Program office in Washington DC. The position description and application instructions are available at <http://tinyurl.com/2ceqnkd>. The deadline for applications is Friday, October 1, 2010.

In addition, the Assessment office is currently seeking federal employees who are interested in being detailed to the Assessment office or supporting the Assessment in other ways, as well as student interns who would like to work on specific projects for school credit. Please contact the Assessments Coordinator (sobrien@usgcrp.gov) if you are interested in obtaining further details about working with the NCA.

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*The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) coordinates and integrates federal research on changes in the global environment and their implications for society. The USGCRP began as a presidential initiative in 1989 and was mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act of 1990(P.L. 101-606), which called for "a comprehensive and integrated United States research program which will assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change."*

*The National Climate Assessment (NCA) is being conducted under the auspices of the Global Change Research Act of 1990, which requires a report to the President and the Congress that evaluates, integrates and interprets the findings of the USGCRP every four years. The NCA aims to incorporate advances in the understanding of climate science into larger social, ecological, and policy systems, and with this provide integrated analyses of impacts and vulnerability, helping the federal government prioritize climate science investments, and helping to provide the science that can be used by communities around our Nation try to create a more sustainable and environmentally-sound plan for our future.*