



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. Since the last newsletter, the NCA has been busy with several workshops, planning meetings, and the conclusion of the comment period for the NCA Federal Register Notice. We also have news about the new USGCRP program activity on Adaptation Science. We hope you will read the newsletter and find out more about all of the recent progress on all of these activities. If you have received this email as a forward, please sign up by clicking on the "join our mailing list" link to the left. 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 3, November 1, 2010

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Comments received on Federal Register Notice

We received comments from 27 individuals and groups in response to our September 7, 2010 [Federal Register Notice](#) on the objectives, proposed topics, and next steps for the National Climate Assessment. We are currently in the process of collating these comments and will post them on our website once the collation is complete. Major themes within the comments include:

- Scope of the proposed effort and the adequacy or inadequacy of resources
- Recognition of existing efforts and the potential value of partnering
- The national role: coordination or facilitation?
- Options for organizing the distributed effort
- Ensure adequate internal linkages (across regions and sectors)
- Additional approaches to the evaluation process
- Multi-stress context
- Full incorporation of Tribal / Alaska Native interests and participation
- Additional groups of concern and environmental justice
- General involvement and recognition of stakeholders
- Relationship of mitigation to the NCA
- The need for a comprehensive outreach and communication component
- Presenting uncertainties and/or likelihood / level of confidence
- Responding to concerns about the validity of climate science
- Praise of the overall NCA vision

These comments will be used to inform the NCA structure and process, and will be provided to the Interagency National Climate Assessment Task Force, participants in the various process-related workshops coming up this fall and winter, and the Federal Advisory Committee for the NCA when it is constituted in December-January.

Opportunity for Public Comments on Planning for Regional and Sectoral Assessments

As a part of the upcoming National Climate Assessment workshop on Planning for Regional and Sectoral Assessments, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to provide brief statements on this topic. The public comment period for the workshop will commence at 4:30 pm on Monday, November 15, 2010 in the Auditorium of USGS Headquarters in Reston, VA (12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192). If you would like more information about speaking during the public comments period at the workshop, or if you are unable to attend and would like to submit a short statement on the topic of planning for regional and sectoral assessments via email, please contact Emily Cloyd (ecloyd@usgcrp.gov).

Knowledge Management Workshop

The Interagency National Climate Assessment Task Force and the U.S. Global Change Research Program held a workshop entitled *Knowledge Management, Data and Review Strategies for the National Climate Assessment*, on September 20-22, 2010 at the U.S. Geological Survey National Center in Reston, Virginia.

There were 59 workshop participants, including scientists, data and information managers and users, and information quality experts. Participants were invited based on their expertise and experience with climate assessments and related activities. Through invited presentations, panels, breakout sessions, and plenary discussions, participants provided individual input that will be summarized for the Interagency National Climate Assessment Task Force and the Federal Advisory Committee (to be established). Specific input was requested on the topics of quality assurance and rigorous peer review processes, data management strategies and ways to include new types and sources of information, and innovative methods for accessibility and information delivery. The NCA is envisioned as both a sustainable, ongoing process that involves stakeholders and scientists across the country, and an effort to complete a report to be by June 2013. In light of these two different objectives, the workshop addressed ways to manage information dynamically, provide timely and usable information, and to ensure overall data quality for sustained assessment activities. Key outcomes included identifying best practices and lessons learned from previous national assessments and other efforts, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the World Bank Climate Portal, and the National Integrated Drought Information System. By engaging with the Office of Management and Budget at this early stage on the requirements of the Information Quality Act and Highly Influential Scientific Assessments, we can ensure that the information presented in the NCA meets the highest standards of transparency and credibility. The workshop also provided an opportunity to make connections to Federal experts who volunteered to work closely with NCA staff to draft strategies and work plans for managing the data, and to work together to ensure that the NCA is closely aligned with other Federal programs and projects.

Questions and Answers about the NCA and NOAA RISAs

Assessment staff met with members of the NOAA Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments teams (11 teams located at universities across the US, focused on facilitating use of climate information, climate-related research and engagement with stakeholders) and with participants from related NOAA and Department of Interior efforts on September 29-October 1, 2010. A number of discussions during the meeting centered on how NOAA RISAs and other regional partners could work with the NCA on the Assessment; in response to several questions that arose

during the meeting, we have compiled a short question and answer summary that we hope will be of use to a broader audience interested in the NCA and its relationship to other Federal climate change science activities. Some of the questions in the summary include:

- How will the regions be defined and how will they dovetail with the RISAs and other government regions?
- How can we pick regions across all the issues we are concerned about?
- How can one talk about the relationship between a sustained process and the selection of national indicators of change?
- How will the integrated cross-sectoral issues be addressed?

For the complete question and answer guide, please see: <http://globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/supporting-documents>.

New Staff Joins NCA Team

The NCA staff is happy to announce that Fred Lipschultz is a new member of the NCA team. Fred Lipschultz is a Senior Scientist for Assessment, and his primary role is to coordinate the regional assessments. He is on a mobility assignment from the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, where he has been a faculty member since 1989. Prior to the NCA, Fred spent 2.5 years at NASA headquarters working as Program Scientist for the Ocean Biology and Biogeochemistry Program in the Earth Sciences Division. Before that, he served 4 years at NSF as Program Officer in the Chemical Oceanography Program in the Geosciences Directorate. During his government service, he has participated in several working groups of the USGCRP, and was the vice-chair of the JSOST interagency working group on Ocean Acidification. Fred's research career focused on the biogeochemistry of the marine nitrogen cycle in various ecosystems including Bermuda's coral reefs, the Sargasso Sea, and the Eastern Tropical Pacific. He earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Harvard University, and his Master's degree in Botany from the University of Maryland.

Other UGCRP News: New Program Element on Adaptation Science

One of the multiple reasons for conducting the National Climate Assessment is to support decisions related to adaptation and mitigation. Recently, the Council on Environmental Quality, in partnership with the Office of Science and Technology Policy and NOAA issued a report (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/adaptation>) to the President on ways to encourage climate adaptation within the federal government broadly. One of the recommendations in that report was to initiate an adaptation science program within USGCRP.

Adaptation is the process of preparing for and building resilience to climate change, as well as responding to unavoidable impacts. Adaptation science is characterized by interdisciplinary studies that bridge across disciplines (e.g. physical, natural, social, economic sciences), as well as the integration of observations, models, research, and decisions across local-to-national scales. There is currently an unmet demand for science to inform adaptation decisions, and this demand will only increase as additional sectors, and society as a whole, act on the challenges posed by climate change. For this reason, a new Strategic Program on Adaptation Science has been formed at USGCRP. This activity will help to ensure that science produced by the USGCRP informs and supports adaptation decisions.

Adaptation requires sustained, ongoing dialogue, and feedback between scientists, decision makers, and information users throughout the research and implementation processes. Therefore, USGCRP will provide critical coordination functions and facilitate collaboration between Federal agencies and their non-Federal partners (i.e.

local, state, tribal, and regional entities, non-profit organizations, private sector, universities) on science in support of adaptation.

Tom Armstrong from the Department of the Interior has been appointed as the Vice Chair for Adaptation at USGCRP to lead the new Adaptation Science initiative. Working with him are Claudia Nierenberg from NOAA and Laura Petes, a AAAS Fellow also at NOAA. The mission of Adaptation Science at USGCRP is to ensure that the Federal Government's science enterprise informs and empowers adaptation decisions at a range of scales for a diversity of users.

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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.