

**The 2011 American Water Resource Association's Spring Specialty Conference –
Managing Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources:
Adaptation Issues, Options, and Strategies
Baltimore, Maryland, April 18-20, 2011**

Activity: Panel discussion on Federal Agency Planning for Climate Change Adaptation; April 18, 2011; 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Panelists: Kathy Jacobs, NCA Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy; Tom Armstrong, U.S. Department of the Interior;¹ Matthew Larsen, U.S. Geological Survey; and Chester J. Koblinsky, NOAA Climate Program Office; the panel was moderated by Gerald E. Galloway (University of Maryland)

Recorder: Tanya Maslak, USGCRP NCO Program Associate

The panel's premise was taken that all Federal Agencies are being asked to evaluate the implications of climate change on their missions and to develop strategies to ensure their missions remain effective in light of a changing climate. In addition, several Agencies are working to ensure that state, local, tribal, and private sector decision-makers in all sectors have the information and tools they need to make informed decisions. The panelists highlighted some of the key initiatives underway to prepare for a changing climate, including:

- **The National Climate Assessment** (Kathy Jacobs) – The National Climate Assessment (NCA) is a Congressionally-mandated study being conducted by the U.S. Global Change Research Program. Its goal is to analyze the effects of global change in the U.S., including trends for the next 25 to 100 years in order to provide the scientific underpinnings of informed policy and decision making. The discussion examined the 3rd NCA, currently underway.
- **Toward a Collaborative Water Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation: Federal Agencies Working Together** (Matt Larsen) - When President Obama directed the federal agencies to form an Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, several workgroups were formed to examine particular issues in-depth. One was the Water Workgroup, co-chaired by the Department of Interior's USGS, the USEPA, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Water Workgroup evaluated a range of climate change and water resources adaptation challenges and developed recommendations that were included in the Progress Report of the Task Force released in October. This presentation described the work underway for building national capacity and resilience in the water sector.
- **NOAA Climate Program Office** (Chester J. Koblinsky) – Individuals and decision-makers across widely diverse sectors – from agriculture to energy to transportation – are increasingly asking for authoritative and timely information about climate change in order to make the best choices for their families, communities and businesses. To meet the rising tide of these requests, NOAA and the other agencies of the U.S. Global Change

¹ Tom Armstrong was not present, presentation given by Matt Larsen.

Research Program have been working to strengthen and integrate climate science and service delivery capabilities. This discussion gave participants a chance to understand NOAA and interagency plans to provide improved climate services, such as the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).

- **DOI Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and Climate Science Center** (Tom Armstrong, presented by Matt Larsen) – The Department of the Interior is establishing Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) and Climate Science Centers (CSCs) to address current and future impacts of climate change on our land, water, wildlife, cultural heritage and tribal resources. The regional CSCs and their partnership networks will provide science to understand which resources are most vulnerable to climate change. The LCCs are intended to engage federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public in crafting practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate change impacts on natural resources. This presentation provided a birds-eye view of progress in establishing these regional centers and discussed opportunities for local engagement.

During the question and answer session, panelists addressed the following:

- The National Climate Assessment will release Workshop reports from all of the process workshops, which will soon be available on the NCA's website (<http://assessment.globalchange.gov>). Some interim NCA products could be phased in after the 2013 Report.
- The more public input the NCA receives on what is needed, the more likely highlighted inputs will be prioritized and addressed by the NCA, such as prioritizing information that would be most useful for the most vulnerable people, places, and sectors.
- Connections to communities and facilitation of connections to networks could help focus and disseminate targeted information for certain communities.
- While commitment still remains for the National Water Census, it is difficult to say how things will play out in 2012 due to budget cuts.