



USGCRP and NCA Newsletter – January 2012

News from the National Climate Assessment

The National Climate Assessment – Progress on Multiple Fronts

The beginning of 2012 means a transition to a new phase in the development of the 2013 National Climate Assessment report, as well as an expansion of our outreach activities. Technical input teams are working hard to complete their reports by March 1. There has been incredible progress in pulling these documents together. Many teams are still holding workshops, with water, health, rural communities, tribal, energy supply and use, transportation, ecosystems and biodiversity, coastal, marine and several regional events scheduled between December 1 and March 1. A few of these events are described in more detail below.

In the meantime, network building, planning and outreach efforts to ensure that the Assessment is part of a sustained process are expanding, with a very positive response from the organizations that have joined NCAnet (see article below). The federal agencies have also been working together on an ongoing funding and operations plan and criteria for prioritizing next steps. And a recent exciting development is the first Community Climate Conversation, held in Charleston. This outreach event was planned and implemented by facilitators in the Keystone Center, one of the partners in NCAnet, and was designed specifically to draw new people and organizations into the Assessment activities. Three more of these “conversations” in other locations are currently in the planning stages.

New Chapters Added to the 2013 Assessment Report

At its last meeting, the National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee (NCADAC) decided to add “Decision Support” and “Mitigation” to the list of Assessment chapters. Convening lead authors (CLAs) for Decision Support are Lynn Scarlett of Resources for the Future and Ed Miles from the University of Washington. The Mitigation CLAs are Tony Janetos of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory/University of Maryland Joint Global Change Research Institute and Jake Jacoby of MIT.

Convening Lead Authors Meeting

During the last week, the Convening Lead Authors (CLAs) of our 30 (!) chapters met in Tucson to take the first steps towards writing the 2013 synthesis report. They worked through examples of how to use the methodologies and framing and evaluation tools that have been developed, to ensure a consistent approach across writing teams and a strong focus on the quality and transparency of the information used to draw conclusions.

Approximately 60 CLAs and members of the NCADAC Executive Secretariat worked together in Tucson to discuss potential key messages, build an understanding of the “risk-based framing” concept, and start to develop their chapter outlines. This meeting included a “world café” that featured issues like how to most effectively integrate themes across regions and sectors, and identifying remaining issues that need to be addressed in the Assessment process. In addition to the CLAs meeting, the Executive Secretariat met twice to address strategic and management issues.

In just a little over a month (March 1), all of the technical input documents that have been in preparation over the last year will be due to the NCA office. The CLAs will work with each chapter’s lead authors to put together 8-page synthesis documents that are due on June 1. Over the summer, the document will be refined and edited, aiming for a public review of the full draft towards the end of 2012.

For a list of the CLAs announced on December 6, visit <http://www.globalchange.gov/whats-new/641-convening-lead-authors-announced-for-the-national-climate-assessment-dec-6-2011>.

Featured NCA Staff Member: Anne Waple

NOAA Technical Support Unit Amazes All

Anne Waple, leader of the NOAA Technical Support Unit in Asheville, has been running her own version of a three-to-five ring circus. Anne has responsibility for planning and running the main meetings of the NCADAC and the synthesis report’s convening lead authors, developing the Global Change Information System in partnership with the USGCRP National Coordination Office, coordinating publication of all of our reports (including the methodology workshop reports that have already come out), overseeing the contracts and staff for editing and graphics, and developing community workspaces and web tools for the authors. In addition, she is lead staff for the information quality workgroup, and keeps an eye on the amazing Ken Kunkel, lead scientist for the Assessment, who is well on his way to developing regional climatologies and projections for all 8 regions of the US as well as a set of national retrospective and prospective scenarios. The aspect of this that impresses all of the rest of us is that Anne

manages all this, and maintains a sense of humor.

Building NCAnet: A Network of Partners to Support the NCA

We are continuing to build the framework for NCAnet, the network of organizations working with the NCA to engage producers and users of assessment information across the United States. In early January we held two additional information sessions for prospective partners, bringing the total number of organizations that have participated in this first step toward partnering with the NCA to over 60. Already, close to 30 organizations have signed up to be partners in NCAnet, and we are planning to facilitate a first conversation among these partners in late January. We are still looking for additional partners that can help us extend the Assessment to stakeholders in the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors and invite representatives from interested organizations to contact Emily Therese Cloyd, NCA Public Participation and Engagement Coordinator, at ecloyd@usgcrp.gov. More information about NCAnet is available from <https://sites.google.com/a/usgcrp.gov/nca-net/home>.

Risk Framing Workshop in Portland

Approximately 50 people from varied backgrounds in Global Change issues met for a day-long “risk-framing” workshop in Portland, OR on December 2, 2011. The objectives were to: 1) rank likelihood and consequences of climate risks to the Northwest region, 2) provide opportunity for input on, and organization of, the region’s technical input, and 3) build capacity for a long-term, sustained regional assessment process. Eight presenters spoke about a climate risk theme for the region, and participants responded to a common set of questions about the consequences using an online survey tool. Each risk theme was then discussed in a breakout session, using the survey results to aggregate and summarize the consequences of each risk, to develop ranking criteria to qualitatively rank the likelihood and magnitude of the consequences (e.g., low, medium, high). This survey-driven approach permitted everyone to contribute their knowledge to each risk category, and got people thinking individually about consequences and rankings before group discussion influenced them. In addition, the survey will provide useful data for analysis and synthesis after the workshop.

Oklahoma Tribal Climate Change Workshop

On December 12, 2011, the University of Oklahoma, the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program, and the Oklahoma Climatological Survey hosted representatives of 21 Oklahoma American Indian Tribes at the Oklahoma Inter-Tribal Meeting on Climate Variability and Change. Held at the National Weather Center in Norman, Oklahoma, the workshop had more than 70 total attendees, including representatives from 3 Oklahoma tribal colleges as well as a tribe from Texas. The day’s activities included presentations by speakers from Haskell Indian Nations University and the University of Oklahoma, as well as facilitated discussions with tribal representatives. Dr. Bull Bennett of Kiksapa Consulting and a member of the NCADAC, discussed what climate change and the national assessment process means for tribes. Small group discussions focused on currently observable changes as well as potential impacts of climate change on tribal lands. The meeting ended with a call to continue the dialog among the tribes on climate issues. The workshop report will be made available for use in preparing the 2013 NCA report. For more information, contact Ralph Cantral at the NCA office, rcantral@usgcrp.gov.

News from the USGCRP

USGCRP Collaborates with the Agency Adaptation Workgroup for a “Science for Adaptation Planning” Session

On January 11, the USGCRP National Coordination Office supported the Agency Adaptation Workgroup at a “Science for Adaptation” Community of Practice meeting between the USGCRP leadership for the National Climate Assessment, the Adaptation Science Workgroup, and the agency representatives responsible for developing their agency adaptation plans by June 2012. The purpose of this session was for USGCRP to present existing science available for Federal agencies to use in the development and implementation of their adaptation plans and discuss the science needs and questions that the agencies have identified. Dr. Ann Bartuska, USGCRP’s Vice Chair for Adaptation Science from the US Department of Agriculture, discussed the USGCRP’s new vision for its research to enable and empower more informed decisions, while Kathy Jacobs, NCA Director, outlined the plans for the 2013 National Climate Assessment and a sustained assessment process.

During the meeting, NOAA Technical Support Unit Leader Anne Waple unveiled the new online 2009 Global Climate Change Impacts website (<http://nca2009.globalchange.gov>) that illustrates the report in an interactive, searchable, and traceable manner with data sets, references, and images.

USGCRP Set to Release New Strategic Plan in February

USGCRP expects to release its 10-year Strategic Plan in mid-February. Entitled “The National Global Change Research Plan 2012-2021: A Strategic Plan for the U.S. Global Change Research Program”, the Plan builds on past accomplishments of the USGCRP and recognizes that effective response to global change starts with a strong scientific foundation. It was developed by an inter-agency team of scientists, engineers, educators, and communications specialists and revised following a public comment period and review of the draft Plan by the National Research Council. The Plan is currently undergoing final agency review prior to its release. The Plan addresses all four areas detailed in the Global Change Research Act: “understand, assess, predict and respond.” The following four goals frame the Strategic Plan:

Goal 1 - Advance Science Advance scientific knowledge of the integrated natural and human components of the Earth system.

Goal 2 - Inform Decisions Provide the scientific basis to inform and enable timely decisions on adaptation and mitigation.

Goal 3 - Sustained Assessments Build sustained assessment capacity that improves the nation’s ability to understand, anticipate, and respond to global change impacts and vulnerabilities.

Goal 4 - Communicate and Educate Advance communications and education to broaden public understanding of global change and develop the scientific workforce of the future.

Announcements

Town Hall Meetings at AMS in New Orleans

The US Global Change Research Program and the National Climate Assessment will each host a town hall meeting during the American Meteorological Society’s Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA.

USGCRP’s Town Hall will take place Tuesday, January 24 from 12:15pm-1:15pm. The agenda includes background of the USGCRP program, a brief overview of the new Strategic Plan and examples of how ongoing USGCRP programs and interagency working groups are evolving to support the new Strategic Goals. The efforts of the cross-cutting Climate Change and Human Health Interagency Working Group will be highlighted as they relate to both USGCRP and the Strategic Plan. Tom Karl, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Global Change Research, and Dr. John Balbus, the USGCRP Principal from the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences/Human Health Services, will be presenting.

NCA’s Town Hall will take place Wednesday January 25 from 12:15-1:15 pm. During the first portion of the session, scientific and program leaders from the NCA will present an update on progress, process and outcomes of the NCA 2013 report, and discuss the vision for a sustained assessment process. The second part of the session will allow participants to ask questions about the NCA process and products and provide input on both the 2013 report and implementation of an ongoing NCA process. The panelists include: Kathy Jacobs (Director, US National Climate Assessment and Assistant Director for Climate and Science Adaptation, Office of Science and Technology Policy), Lynne Carter (Associate Director, Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program and Associate Director, Coastal Sustainability Studio at LSU), Rezaul Mahmood (Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Geology at Western Kentucky University and Associate Director, Kentucky Climate Center, Kentucky Mesonet), and Nancy Grimm (Senior Scientist for the National Climate Assessment and the National Science Foundation).

CCHHG to Host Two Regional Climate and Health Workshops in February

As part of its technical input to the National Climate Assessment, the interagency group on Climate Change and Human Health (CCHHG) will be hosting two regional climate and health workshops. The first will be held on February 13th and 14th in Charleston, South Carolina, and the second will be held on February 23rd and 24th in Seattle, Washington. Both workshops will bring together biological, physical and social scientists with public health and natural resource decision-makers working on human health effects of climate change such as ocean and coastal related health risks, vector-borne and water-borne disease, heat and weather-related effects, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

[back to top](#)