



## USGCRP and NCA Newsletter – March 2012

### News From the Assessment

#### **A Note from NCA Director Kathy Jacobs: Update and Next Steps for the National Climate Assessment**

March 1 was an important day for all who are participating in the National Climate Assessment – it was the first major deadline in the development of the 2013 report. We are thrilled to report that in response to our Request for Information, we received over 250 technical input documents from over 120 individuals or teams – an additional 200+ came in through working groups of the National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee (NCADAC). This is the first time that the US Government opened its electronic portals to receive climate related data, observations, and reports from academia, NGOs, and the public. We know that thousands of volunteers and hundreds of federal employees were engaged in working on these documents. Many of the resulting synthesis reports, including many that were launched by NCADAC members, federal agencies, and NCAnet partners, are hundreds of pages long and represent new work and insights that we would not have had access to in any other way.



Charleston South Carolina rolls out the welcome mat for the NCA February 12, 2012.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the agencies that helped to support collaborative teams to develop some of the technical input reports. Particularly noteworthy are the contributions of NOAA, NASA, DOE, DOI, USDA, EPA, NSF, DOT, and HHS, all of whom supported the 40 workshops that were held to develop information for these reports. In many cases, employees within these agencies burned a lot of midnight oil ensuring that the documents were ready to be submitted by the deadline.

Thanks also to the volunteers across the country in universities and the public and private sectors who participated in teams to support all of the regional and sectoral topics in the 2013 report. We are amazed at your energy and generosity, and look forward to continuing these partnerships. You are all awesome!

These same agencies and volunteers have been working tirelessly with us to ensure the success of the sustained assessment (beyond 2013) process. The Interagency National Climate Assessment (INCA) working group is currently developing an operating plan that will support the foundational elements of the process (the Global Change Information System, the Indicators, the ongoing Scenarios efforts, the NCAnet, for example) as well as the special reports that will be produced in 2014, 2015 and beyond...

### **Other Progress**

We were recently asked for a “progress update” to summarize what has been achieved in the last two years. In response, we provide the following list:

- Established a 13+ agency Interagency Working Group (INCA) that plans and manages the federal components of the Assessment; the group has met every other week for the past two years.
- Working with the USGCRP Principals, established an interagency agreement to support the central office and coordination functions of the Assessment over the long term.
- Hosted over 40 workshops focused on assessing impacts and vulnerabilities in 8 regions and 13 sectors, evaluating the state of climate science, and identifying research needs.
- Conducted over 25 listening sessions and presentations at professional societies to request feedback on our approach.
- Held 14 methodology workshops and published 10 workshop reports to provide a consistent foundation for the work of our distributed assessment teams.
- Developed scenarios and a wide variety of guidance documents to be used in the 2013 Assessment process, including new sea level rise scenarios.
- Developed new regional historical climatologies and climate projections for all 8 regions of the US.
- Developed a volunteer network of organizations to support the Assessment outside the government: NCAnet now has over 40 partner organizations.
- Initiated development of the first national indicator system to evaluate rates of change and the ability of the US to respond.
- Assembled a highly-diverse 60 member federal advisory committee that is responsible for developing the 2013 report and providing advice on the ongoing NCA process; conducted four meetings of the NCADAC and 8 in-person meetings of the

Executive Secretariat in the last year.

- Selected 240 authors from the public and private sectors and academia to write the 30 chapters of the 2013 report.
- Developed and conducted multiple kinds of engagement activities, including
  - the Assessment website;
  - a communications and engagement plan;
  - e-newsletters that are distributed to 2500 people every 2 months;
  - multiple Federal Register Notices requesting comments,
  - the initial “Climate Conversations” hosted by The Keystone Center; and
  - the first ever Request for Information from the public to support the 2013 Assessment report.

• We estimate that we have engaged over 3000 people in the Assessment process in one way or another over the last two years.

## Recent Events

### Coastal Development Workshop and Related Events

Charleston, South Carolina was the venue for three coordinated events from January 9-13. On January 9, the lead authors of the technical input team presented a draft summary of key findings and vulnerabilities to the attendees of a NOAA-sponsored workshop on “Climate Science in Support of Coastal Management”. At that workshop, NCA staff members Fred Lipschultz and Ralph Cantral facilitated breakout sessions to elicit responses to the draft information, and how they envisioned using the technical input and the 2013 Chapter in their work.

The central NCA event was the meeting of the team working on the technical input for the Coastal Development chapter, aimed at garnering feedback across the report sections from all the authors, fitting the information together, and filling gaps within sections. By noon on Friday the 13th, over 200 pages were in place for authors to work with before submitting the report to the NCA.

On Friday afternoon, the first listening session of The Keystone Center's Climate Conversations project began. Facilitated by Keystone staff, approximately 50 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds engaged in small group dialogues about how changes in weather and climate might impact them in the future, how they might envision responding to those changes, and what information would be most helpful in their decision making (see the article on NCAnet for more information about these and other NCAnet partner activities).

### *Oceans and Marine Resources Workshop*

A diverse group of ocean scientists from Federal agencies, academia, and NGOs came together January 23-24 at NOAA's Silver Spring (Maryland) headquarters, and simultaneously at NOAA's Alaska Fisheries Science Center, to work on their technical input report on Oceans and Marine Resources. To minimize travel, the agenda was designed to permit team members on each coast to spend the distal portions of the day working without the other coast, and then come together for joint discussions using video conferencing during the center of the workday. NCA staff Fred Lipschultz and Ralph Cantral described the NCA process and provided guidance on expectations. Lead authors for each section then presented short reports on progress for the five primary sections: Chemical and Physical Drivers; Impacts on Marine Organisms; Ocean Services; International Implications; and Adaptation Efforts, Challenges, Opportunities. Group discussions focused on identifying a core set of conclusions and case studies for each section; at the end of each day, outputs from each coast were shared with the other to maximize efficiency. The meeting finished with agreement on a final timeline to submission on March 1, 2012.



in Silver Spring, MD.

### **NCAers Get to Know the Unique Landscape and Culture of Coastal Louisiana**

On January 25, the National Climate Assessment hosted a Town Hall Meeting at the American Meteorological Society's Annual Meeting in New Orleans with approximately 35 participants. The session discussed

critical issues faced by the Assessment and the USGCRP, identified some emerging scientific themes for consideration, outlined the topics and process for creating the next synthesis (2013) NCA report, and discussed the vision for a sustained assessment process. Panelists included Kathy Jacobs, Director of the NCA; NCA Development and Advisory Committee members Lynne Carter and Rezaul Mahmood; and Nancy Grimm, an NCA senior scientist and chapter author. During the second part of the session, participants asked questions about the NCA process and products and provided input on both the 2013 report and implementation of an ongoing NCA process. A report on the listening session is available from the NCA's activities page (<http://globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/workshop-and-meeting-reports>).

NCA Director Kathy Jacobs and Intern Julie Maldonado spent the evening of January 25 and the day of January 26 in Pointe-au-Chien, Louisiana, sharing Assessment information with four Tribal communities and in turn, learning about their unique local experiences. The communities graciously shared their stories and traditional ecological knowledge to provide important input into the NCA about their experiences of climate, weather and other environmental changes, what climate change means for the communities and how they are responding to these issues. We were able to see first-hand the intense land loss, coastal erosion and environmental devastation these communities have to deal with on a daily basis as they fight passionately to save their ancestral land and unique culture and way of life.

### **NCAnet Launches with Over 40 Partners**

On January 30, the NCA office hosted the first conversation among NCAnet partners, a network of organizations working with the NCA to engage producers and users of assessment information across the United States. A wide variety of partners have already joined NCAnet; the 40+ organizations include representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal governments; professional societies; NGOs; academia; and private sector organizations. The first conversation focused on what partners are looking for in NCAnet and how to engage a broad range of partners and audiences in the NCA. Future conversations will focus on topics such as techniques for engaging stakeholders, how we know the assessment is having an impact, learning from the assessment process over time, and building the NCAnet network capabilities. Already, partner organizations are holding events in support of the NCA, and more will be announced soon. For information about NCAnet, a list of partners, how your organization might join, and upcoming NCAnet activities, visit <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov> or contact Emily Therese Cloyd at [ecloyd@usgcrp.gov](mailto:ecloyd@usgcrp.gov).

### **Rural Communities Workshop**

The Rural Communities workshop was held on February 13-14, in Charleston, South Carolina and by all accounts it was a big success. Attendees included approximately 55 stakeholders from across government, non-profits, and academia, and from disciplines as diverse as rural sociology, agricultural economics, Extension, transportation planning, and tourism. The workshop collected opinions and data on the impacts of climate change across multiple sectors of rural communities, including health, governance and finance, transportation, resource-based employment (agriculture, forestry, fisheries), and amenity-based employment (tourism and recreation). It began with plenary talks given by subject matter experts and was followed by breakout sessions to collect expert input; day 2 featured presentations that were designed to highlight opportunities for collaboration and on-the-ground work in rural communities.

As might be expected with such a diverse crowd, results from the workshop were diverse and wide-ranging. Some of the key themes included:

- The need to frame the issue of climate change carefully when speaking with rural communities. Many in rural communities see climate change as an "elite" issue and don't want to engage in it. Actions should instead be framed in terms of community resiliency and sustainability.
- Greater value needs to be placed on ecosystem services. These are among the nation's most valuable assets and provide not only economic benefits to rural communities, but quality-of-life benefits to rural and urban communities alike.
- Flexibility in governance is key to enacting change in rural communities.
- There is a value and need for more Cooperative Extension activity, especially with regard to climate issues. Extension is seen as a trusted, neutral arbiter in many communities and will have success in communicating with rural communities in ways that government and other players will not.

Finally, one of the most common themes to emerge was the need to recognize that rural communities are all different. The key to success will be listening to communities and adaptively responding to their needs on an individual basis. Findings from the workshop have been compiled into a technical report, which will inform the Rural Communities chapter of the NCA report.

### **Southeast and Northwest Climate Change and Human Health Workshops**

Two climate and health workshops were held during February. The first workshop, held February 13-14 in Charleston, South

Carolina, brought together more than 50 participants to discuss climate impacts on health in the Southeastern United States. Attendees ranged from human and environmental health researchers to local government health officials. The meeting provided opportunities to learn of recent research outcomes as well as to collect input on potential climate impacts on both health and the environment. A similar workshop for the Northwest was held in Seattle on February 23-24. Reports for both of these workshops have been submitted as technical inputs to the National Climate Assessment. For more information about the outcomes of the workshops, visit the NCA's activities page (<http://globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/workshop-and-meeting-reports>).

### Northeast Region Listening Session

On February 16, 2012 in Morgantown, West Virginia, contributors to the Northeast Technical Input Report held the first of several listening sessions to be held around their Region. These sessions are meant to initiate a proactive, participatory process of information gathering, putting an emphasis on collaboration, learning, and the promotion of information flow amongst a variety of groups. The listening sessions provide a forum for capturing residents' (including local experts, decision makers, community organizations, etc.) perspectives about climate and extreme weather related issues at the local and regional scale. Following an overview of what is currently understood about regional climate impacts, participants engaged in an open dialogue around four topics: (1) Climate and extreme weather risks and impacts, (2) Vulnerability, (3) Preparedness, and (4) Data and Information gaps.

The participants identified two common themes during the session: critical impacts on 1) hydrology and water resources and 2) aquatic and terrestrial species, although multiple factors magnified vulnerability in the region. The need expressed by nearly all of the participants is for straightforward and explicit education material demonstrating potential regionally-specific impacts. The input from the participants reveals which resources for further collaboration and knowledge production.

Bryce Golden-Chen in Honduras



### NCA Develops Partnerships in the Caribbean

During February, USGCRP Climate Program Specialist Bryce Golden-Chen traveled to Utila in the Bay Islands off the northern coast of Honduras. His two week trip was sponsored by the US Department of State and Harvard University LASPAU Climate Change Professional Fellows Program as the reciprocal part of an exchange that brought Michelle Fernandez, manager of the Municipal Environmental Office of Utila, to Washington, D.C. to work with USGCRP and the National Climate Assessment during September and October of 2011.

While in D.C., Michelle began writing a technical input report for the Caribbean section of the Southeast regional chapter of the upcoming 2013 National Climate Assessment. During his visit to Utila, Bryce assisted Michelle with finalizing the report before its March 1st submission and lent a hand to other environment-related work on the island. Bryce helped with various measurements for land management and urban planning, attended meetings with the Bay Islands Conservation Association about potential wetland conservation sites, visited the tropical forest and intertidal habitats, observed the capture of invasive lionfish out on the surrounding coral reefs, and helped construct and deploy new eco-education signs on

Utila and new recycling bins on the neighboring island of Roatan.

### Climate Leadership Conference

On February 29, NCA Director Kathy Jacobs joined leaders from business, government, academia, and the non-profit for the first annual Climate Leadership Conference (<http://www.climateleadershipconference.org>), in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Jacobs anchored a session on Adaptation and Assessment, and was joined on the panel by NCADAC members Dr. Lynne Carter of Louisiana State University and Jayantha Obeysekera of the South Florida Water District. Lynne discussed the importance of understanding the regional implications of climate change, and Obey discussed the impressive local adaptation planning efforts in South Florida. It was a great opportunity to reach new audiences and meet new potential partners for the NCAnet. More information about the conference and about USGCRP's participation, is available from our news blog (<http://www.globalchange.gov/whats-new/656-nca-and-regional-adaptation-are-key-topics-at-climate-leadership-conference>).



Kathy Jacobs talks with participants in the Climate Leadership Conference following the panel on Adaptation and Assessment.

### News from the U.S. Global Change Research Program

#### USGCRP's New Strategic Plan

USGCRP expects to release its 10-year National Global Change Research Plan in April. This Strategic Plan will guide the USGCRP activities during 2012-2021. The Plan builds on past accomplishments of the USGCRP and recognizes that effective response to global change starts with a strong scientific foundation. 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 – Conduct 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.

### New Social Sciences Task Force

The new USGCRP Strategic Plan recognizes that many of the most important questions about understanding and responding to global change cannot be properly addressed without substantial contributions from social scientists. To support its mission and vision, the USGCRP must work hard to integrate the contributions of economists, geographers, anthropologists, cognitive scientists, behavioral scientists, sociologists, political scientists, urban planners, public health researchers, and other experts with its research activities in the physical, chemical, and biological sciences. This will be a difficult challenge, but the new Strategic Plan now provides a critical opportunity to enhance the engagement of the global change science community with many of these disciplines.

As a first step, the Program has established a Social Sciences Task Force of experts from across the USGCRP agencies to explore options, and provide recommendations, for improving the integration of needed social sciences contributions into the USGCRP portfolio. In areas such as understanding the human drivers of global change, what determines vulnerability and resilience to global change impacts, and the methods and tools of effective decision support, the Task Force will help USGCRP answer questions like:

- What are the most urgent and timely social sciences questions for USGCRP?
- What expertise is needed to address these topics?
- What communities and partners could engage with USGCRP in these areas?
- How can the Program leverage the new capacity being built in the National Climate Assessment to bring social sciences expertise to bear on global change?

This Task Force effort will play a critical role in helping USGCRP ultimately achieve the expanded Program scope called for in the Strategic Plan.

### Announcing USGCRP’s New Resource Library!

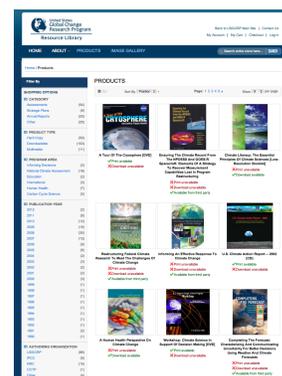
USGCRP recently launched a revamped Resource Library website for easier, more intuitive access to Federal global change resources (<http://library.globalchange.gov>). The Resource Library — USGCRP’s access hub for publications, reports, and other global change resources — fulfills the Congressional mandate for a Global Change Research Information Office (GCRIO).

GCRIO was mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act of 1990 “to disseminate to foreign governments, businesses, and institutions, as well as citizens of foreign countries, scientific research information available in the United States which would be useful in preventing, mitigating, or adapting to the effects of global change,” and was formally launched in May 1993.

The redesigned Resource Library provides access to more than 100 products containing data and information on climate change research, adaptation and mitigation strategies and technologies, as well as relevant educational resources. Most of the reports and publications in the Resource Library are available to users free of charge.

The revamped site features clear explanations of various publications and reports as well as enhanced search functionality that allows users to refine and tailor searches to their specific needs.

Visit the USGCRP Resource Library at: [www.library.globalchange.gov](http://www.library.globalchange.gov)



Screen shot of USGCRP's new Resource Library website.

### Carbon Management Conference

NCA Director Kathy Jacobs was the luncheon keynote speaker at the first Carbon Management Conference, held in Orlando, Florida on February 7. She talked about the adaptation-related activities of the federal government, with particular focus on USGCRP, the Adaptation Task Force, and the Assessment. This conference was a first-ever opportunity to address major engineering firms, engineering professional societies, and energy production companies about climate adaptation. The speakers at this conference were excellent and it was inspiring to hear the commitments and achievements related to sustainability described by major corporations.

### USGCRP Staff Host Visitors from Indonesia

In February, USGCRP staff met with Ms. Eniya Listiani Dewi and Mr. Mahendra Taher, visitors from Indonesia who were participating in the International Visitor Leadership Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The participants' program in the U.S. focuses on how federal, state, and local energy policies and incentives get translated into on-the-ground investment decisions in the US. USGCRP staff provided an overview of the U.S. Global Change Research Program, including the recent strategic planning effort, the National Climate Assessment, the Carbon Cycle Science Program, and USGCRP's cooperation with international research programs.



Indonesia

### Authors of “A US Carbon Cycle Science Plan” (2011) Brief USGCRP

The USGCRP's Carbon Cycle Science Program is organizing formal presentations and briefings of the 2011 Carbon Cycle Science Plan by the plan authors at USDA, NASA, DOE and other CCIWG member agencies during March 2012. On such briefing took place on Wednesday March 14, 2012, when Dr. Gregg Marland from Appalachian State University presented and discussed the 2011 Carbon Cycle Science Plan at the USGCRP Principals' Brown Bag Seminar. The plan was written by carbon cycle scientists across the U.S. at the request of the Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG). Details of the Plan can be found on [www.carboncyclescience.gov](http://www.carboncyclescience.gov).

## Upcoming Events

**March 26-29: Planet Under Pressure.** The USGCRP will play an active role in the upcoming Planet Under Pressure 2012 meeting in London, UK. The vision (<http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net/conferencevision.asp>) for the meeting is well aligned with the USGCRP's recently released decadal Strategic Plan that focuses on fundamental science along with informing decisions, sustained assessment as well as communication and education that will prepare the United States in mitigating and adapting to environmental change. Tim Killeen, USGCRP Vice-Chair for Strategic Planning, and David Allen, USGCRP International Program Associate, will participate in leading and facilitating USGCRP-related sessions:

- **March 27: Future Earth: Research for Global Sustainability** ([http://pressure.sparks.co.uk/pup\\_session.asp?19132](http://pressure.sparks.co.uk/pup_session.asp?19132))
- **March 29: The US Global Change Research Program: Meeting Global Needs through Fundamental Scientific Research** ([http://pressure.sparks.co.uk/pup\\_session.asp?19160](http://pressure.sparks.co.uk/pup_session.asp?19160))

**March 28: Society for Applied Anthropology Conference.** Emily Cloyd, NCA Public Participation and Engagement Coordinator, is chairing a panel on USGCRP and the National Climate Assessment. Other panelists include Emily Wasley, USGCRP Adaptation Science Program Associate, and George Luber, Centers for Disease Control and Coordinating Lead Author for the Human Health chapter of the 2013 NCA report. NCA Intern Julie Maldonado will serve as a discussant on the panel.

**April 10: National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee Meeting.** The National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee will meet by webinar on April 10 from 2 to 4 pm EDT. More information about the meeting will be posted to our website and in the Federal Register.

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