



## USGCRP and NCA Newsletter – November 2011

### **Introduction**

There is a lot of change in the air this fall – major shifts in the focus of the US Global Change Research Program, which is being restructured to be more focused on supporting societal needs, and a significant shift in the National Climate Assessment activities as teams focus on writing the background documents that will be used by author teams next spring.

### **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT**

#### ***Upcoming NCADAC Meeting: November 16-17 in Boulder, CO***

The National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee (NCADAC) will meet November 16-17 at the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory David Skaggs Research Center in Boulder, CO. The meeting may have limited seating capacity; seats are available on a first come-first served basis. Any member of the public wishing further information concerning the meeting, including opportunities for public comments, should contact: Dr. Cynthia Decker, the NCADAC Designated Federal Official (DFO), SSMC3, Room 11230, 1315 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Phone: (301) 734-1156, Fax: (301) 713-1459. E-mail: [cynthia.decker@noaa.gov](mailto:cynthia.decker@noaa.gov). More information about the meeting is available from [http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/NCADAC/November\\_16\\_Meeting.html](http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/NCADAC/November_16_Meeting.html).

#### ***Progress in Naming Assessment Authors***

The National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee (NCADAC), with support from the NCA staff, have been working hard to establish author teams for each of the chapters in the Assessment report for 2013. Eight people (generally two convening lead authors and six lead authors) will be named for each of the 28 chapters, a total of well over 200 authors who need to be carefully considered prior to selection. There are now convening lead authors named for all of the chapters, and the full author teams will be announced by the committee in the near future.

#### ***Executive Secretariat Activities***

The Executive Secretariat of the NCADAC met in Woods Hole, MA in October with a jam-packed agenda that included:

- Discussing author teams, including a suggested training session for the “convening lead authors” in January;
- Refining the proposed schedule for completing the 2013 report, including more clarity on the deadlines for including new information in the draft chapters;
- Discussing major steps forward on the engagement strategy, including new funding for public engagement activities to be conducted by Keystone Center and establishment of NCAnet, a network of partner organizations for the NCA;
- Planning for the Executive Secretariat, Working Group, and NCADAC meetings in Colorado November 14-17, including an associated demonstration public engagement event using “café-style” facilitation;
- Discussing the principles and approaches to be developed for information quality guidance for different types of evidence;
- Potential contents of regional, sectoral, and introductory chapters; and
- The approach to adaptation and mitigation components of the assessment.

#### ***NCAnet: A Network of Networks to Support the NCA***

Much of the stakeholder engagement of the National Climate Assessment (NCA) will be accomplished through a network of partner organizations that can extend the NCA process and products to a broader audience. In the broadest sense, this “network of networks” (NCAnet) will include all of the organizations that deliberately work to connect the NCA with a broad array of stakeholders. More specifically, the NCA is also seeking to build long-term capacity to conduct and use assessments by cultivating partnerships with organizations that will participate in the sustained assessment process. In late October and early November, the NCA hosted a number of information sessions introducing NCAnet to prospective partners. Over 60 individuals representing over 50 organizations participated in the information sessions. We are still in the process of building NCAnet and invite others who missed these sessions to learn more about NCAnet at <https://sites.google.com/a/usgcrp.gov/nca-net/home>. If you have further questions about NCAnet, please contact Emily Therese Cloyd, NCA Public Participation and Engagement Coordinator, at [ecloyd@usgcrp.gov](mailto:ecloyd@usgcrp.gov).

### ***Preliminary Guidance on Priority Topics and Information Quality for the NCA***

The NCA's "Preliminary Guidance on Eight Priority Topics for the 2013 National Climate Assessment" is now available online (<http://www.globalchange.gov/images/NCA/nca-priority-topics-guidance.pdf>). The document is intended to give guidance to technical input teams and chapter authors on eight topics that are priorities for the 2013 NCA: 1) risk-based framing, 2) confidence characterization and communication, 3) documentation, information quality, and traceability, 4) engagement, communications, and evaluation, 5) adaptation and mitigation, 6) international context, 7) scenarios and 8) sustained assessment. The document is not intended to be an exhaustive resource on all these topics, but rather to provide a short overview of these topics.

The NCA is also pleased to announce the publication of "Preliminary Guidance on Information Quality Assurance in Preparing Technical Input for the National Climate Assessment." (<http://www.globalchange.gov/images/NCA/nca-info-quality-assurance-faq.pdf>) This short document addresses a number of frequently asked questions about information quality in the technical inputs to the NCA.

Revisions to these brief guidance documents and more information about these topics will be posted on the NCA website (<http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/opportunities-for-engagement>) and notice of updates will be included in the NCA newsletter.

### ***Recent Regional and Sectoral Workshops and Meetings***

The past two months have been a busy time for the teams working on regional and sectoral technical inputs. Most of the teams have now held organizational meetings and several teams have already held or will soon be holding larger workshops. Summaries of these meetings and workshops will be posted on the NCA's workshop and meeting reports page (<http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/workshop-and-meeting-reports>) as they become available. A list of upcoming meetings and workshops is available from the opportunities for engagement page (<http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/opportunities-for-engagement>).

## **REPORTS FROM RECENT USGCRP EVENTS**

### ***Workshop: Engaging with Stakeholders to Enhance Decision Making in a Changing Climate***

On September 26th, USGCRP, the Association for Climate Change Officers (ACCO), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University co-sponsored "Enhancing Decision Making: A Roundtable Workshop on Improving the Understanding of the Economic, Environmental, and Operational Implications of Climate Change" in Chicago, IL. Workshop participants, including senior federal officials, state and local government managers, and private industry leaders, worked together to identify science and decision making needs crucial to making the business and/or operations case for establishing sound global change strategies.

The USGCRP Vice Chair for Adaptation Science, Ann Bartuska (Under Secretary for US Department of Agriculture's [USDA] Research, Education, and Economics) and the co-chair for the Adaptation Science Workgroup, David Cleaves (Climate Change Advisor to the Chief, USDA Forest Service) presented with the goal to: (1) establish a multi-way dialogue with new stakeholders in the Chicago region; (2) relay information regarding USGCRP's new strategic direction; and (3) gain information regarding barriers and opportunities for informing adaptation decisions. Several outcomes of the workshop included an improved understanding of the science and resources decision-makers are using to develop and implement adaptation strategies, criteria's of success for public private partnerships, and opportunities and challenges for integrated adaptation and mitigation approaches.

### ***World Climate Research Program Open Science Conference 2011***

On 24-28 October 2011 in Denver, Colorado, the World Climate Research Program (WCRP) hosted an Open Science Conference (OSC) "Climate Research in Service to Society." Registration for the conference exceeded 1900 people from 86 countries and 332 of the over 523 of the conference's early career scientists were from less developed countries. Over the five-day conference, the WCRP discussed the past achievements, current activities, and future challenges of the organization. At the forefront, as the theme of the meeting indicates, was the challenge of improving the information and knowledge provided by the climate science community to the rest of the world in terms of user-driven research, climate-related products and services, and assessment, while addressing the many remaining science questions that require significant ongoing research. The WCRP community also discussed challenges related to maintaining access to data and sustaining critical observing systems.

Tom Karl, USGCRP Chair, gave a keynote presentation on the program on the opening day of the meeting. Craig Robinson (NSF) along with Michael Tanner (NOAA), and Jack Kaye (NASA, former USGCRP Chair), held a town hall later in the meeting in

which they provided an overview of the draft Strategic Plan and solicited feedback from the WCRP community. Participants in the session had wide-ranging questions, but many were directed at the underlying strategies for USGCRP's new emphases on climate services, inclusion of social sciences, and sustaining observations. Participants were encouraged to provide formal feedback on the Strategic Plan via the web site (see above), but the Town Hall, in particular, demonstrated that there is a great deal of interest in and support of the new directions that USGCRP is heading.

### ***Workshop: Enhancing Health Considerations in Climate Adaptation Planning***

On October 28th, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), in close consultation with the USGCRP's Interagency Cross-cutting Group on Climate Change and Human Health (CCHHG), hosted a workshop on climate change adaptation for federal agencies and relevant stakeholders. The workshop was held to support the recommendations put forward by the in the Interagency Adaptation Taskforce's report to the President in October 2010. The goal of the workshop was to identify ways in which health impacts can be considered in the context of climate adaptation planning by:

- Identifying opportunities to enhance the incorporation of health considerations in Federal climate adaptation planning, clarifying the specific focus on adaptation planning impacts on health in contrast to broader considerations of climate change
- Delineating federal roles and partnerships in climate adaptation planning with state and local planning authorities
- Providing examples of projects where federal agencies have leveraged grant programs and collaborated across agency and governmental lines to promote health considerations in adaptation planning

A white paper summarizing the results, considerations, and questions of the workshop is currently under review and will be made available on the USGCRP and CEQ websites when finalized.

### ***2011 GreenGov Symposium: Integrating Global Change Science into Adaptation Planning***

On October 30, USGCRP's Executive Director, Tom Armstrong, presented at this year's GreenGov Symposium on "Climate Risk and Resilience: Integrating Global Change Science into Adaptation Planning." Armstrong provided a brief overview of global change impacts, a summary of USGCRP and its new strategic direction, an overview of the Adaptation Science Interagency Workgroup, and some new initiatives regarding regional global change science and coordination, stakeholder engagement, and the global change information system. Armstrong was joined on the panel by Jeff Arnold (Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a USGCRP Adaptation Science Workgroup member), Robert Hyman (Sustainable Transport & Climate Change Team, U.S. Department of Transportation), and Brian Helmuth (Director, Environment and Sustainability Program, University of South Carolina).

### ***Town Hall Meeting: American Public Health Association***

On November 2, the co-chairs of the Interagency Cross-cutting Group on Climate Change and Human Health (CCHHG) held a town hall meeting at the American Public Health Association's (APHA) annual meeting. The town hall meeting consisted of the following topics:

- Summary of the National Climate Assessment (NCA) and USGCRP strategic plan program priorities, including adaptation science, climate services, integrated observations, fundamental research, modeling, assessments and communication.
- Introduction of the Monitoring, Early Warning Systems, Data Integration and Surveillance (MEDS) project, coordinated by the CCHHG, which seeks to coordinate, organize and disseminate climate data sources.
- Discussion of the CCHHG's Communication, Education and Engagement (CEE) efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the health implications of climate change and elucidate the role of the public health and environmental health communities in preventing and responding to climate change.

Discussion with the town hall participants focused on the differences between the NCA and the USGCRP strategic plan, opportunities to engage health through the NCA, opportunities to use MEDS metadata when the interface is complete later this month and opportunities for CEE to engage key stakeholders.

## **RECENT REPORTS AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

### ***USGCRP Draft Strategic Plan for 2012-2012 – Open for Public Comment until November 29, 2011***

Members of the public are invited to review the Draft Strategic Plan for the US Global Change Research Program for 2012-2021

and provide their comments and feedback at <http://strategicplancomments.globalchange.gov/>. The Plan builds on past accomplishments of the USGCRP and recognizes that effective responses to global change require a strong scientific foundation. The Plan is built around four integrated goals: Advance Science, Inform Decisions, Sustained Assessments, and Communicate and Educate. The draft Plan is open for public comment through November 29, 2011. It is also being reviewed by the National Research Council during this period.

### ***Release of “A US Carbon Cycle Science Plan (2011)”***

The US Carbon Cycle Science Program is pleased to announce the release of *A US Carbon Cycle Science Plan (2011)*. The development of this new plan was initiated by the US Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group and the Carbon Cycle Science Steering Group and outlines a strategy for refocusing US carbon cycle research based on the current state of the science. The resulting plan is a report of the Carbon Cycle Science Steering Group and Subcommittee. The development of this Plan was led by a committee of 25 active members of the carbon cycle research community, co-chaired by Anna Michalak, Rob Jackson, Gregg Marland, and Chris Sabine, and the result is intended to provide U.S. funding agencies with information on community-based research priorities for carbon cycle science over the next decade. More information, including a PDF of the plan, is available from the US Carbon Cycle Science Program website: <http://www.carboncyclescience.gov/>.

### ***Council on Environmental Quality Releases the 2011 Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force Report***

On October 28, the Council on Environmental Quality released a new report that outlines the federal government's progress in expanding and strengthening the nation's capacity to better understand, prepare for, and respond to extreme events and other climate change impacts. This report, produced by the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, provides an update on actions in key areas of Federal adaptation, including: building resilience in local communities, safeguarding critical natural resources such as freshwater, and providing accessible climate information and tools to help decision-makers manage climate risks. The report is available online at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/2011\\_adaptation\\_progress\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/2011_adaptation_progress_report.pdf).

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