

United States
Global Change
Research Program

NEWSLETTER

OF THE

U.S. GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAM & NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

U.S. Global Change Research Program
National Climate
Assessment

HIGHLIGHTS

We are about halfway through the public comment period for the National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee's draft Third National Climate Assessment Report (available from <http://ncadac.globalchange.gov>). There have been over 132,000 downloads of the full draft report and/or individual chapters since the comment period opened, and thousands more downloads every week. During this comment period, National Climate Assessment staff, report authors, and partners in NCAnet have been providing briefings on the report and hosting discussions about the sustained assessment process. If you haven't looked through the report yet or provided your comments, there is still time – the public comment period ends at 5 pm Eastern on April 12; all comments must be submitted via the online comment website.

The US Global Change Research Program is pleased to announce the release of the fiscal year 2013 annual report to Congress, Our Changing Planet (available from <http://library.globalchange.gov/products/annualreports/our-changing-planet-2013>). For more specific information on what's inside the report, check out the White House blog contribution at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/03/07/global-change-research-benefit-nation>. Also highlighted below are new federal agency adaptation plans and recent activities of the US Carbon Cycle Science Program.

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

Sustained assessment special report

An author team is hard at work developing a draft of the first special report of the sustained assessment process – fittingly, it is a report on designing and implementing the sustained assessment process. The convening lead authors are Jim Buizer, University of Arizona; Paul Fleming, Seattle Public Utilities; and Sharon Hays, Computer Sciences Corporation. The lead authors on the report are Kirstin Dow, University of South Carolina; Chris Field, Stanford University and IPCC; David Gustafson, Monsanto; Richard Moss, University of Maryland and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; Amy Luers, Skoll Global Threats Fund; and John Hall, Department of Defense, as the liaison to the federal government. Their assignment is to prepare a draft report for consideration by the National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee (NCADAC) that gives advice to the federal government on how to ensure a sustained assessment process; the NCADAC is required by their charter to provide this advice. The author team will have a draft for review by the NCADAC in early April; the report will be edited, reviewed and revised over the late spring and early summer with tentative approval by the full NCADAC scheduled at the end of August.

Outreach during the draft NCA report public comment period

Emily Cloyd, the NCA Public Participation and Engagement Coordinator, has organized and led the implementation of regional town halls in each of the eight NCA regions and coordinated talks and sessions at many professional society meetings and other conferences (see list below). Emily had substantial assistance from NCAnet partners (<http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov>), many of whom have organized their own events around the release of the draft NCA report, NCADAC members and report authors, NCA staff members, and several USGCRP agencies. The purpose of this engagement was three-fold: 1) to stay engaged with regional and sectoral teams who have supported this NCA process and encourage them to think about the sustained assessment; 2) to introduce the findings of the NCA that are relevant to



particular audiences; and 3) to brainstorm about ways to engage new and existing stakeholders in helping to sustain the NCA process over time. Without exception we have received positive feedback from the participants in these meetings, and lots of good ideas. The ideas are being passed along to the Sustained Assessment Special Report author team.

Regional town hall meetings (December 2012 – March 2013): Honolulu, HI; La Jolla, CA; Syracuse, NY; Lincoln, NE; Anchorage, AK; Ann Arbor, MI; Tampa, FL; and Portland, OR. Links to information about each meeting, including presentations and video archives (when available) can be found at <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/nca-activities/opportunities-for-engagement#question1>.

Professional society meetings and other conferences (December 2012 – March 2013): American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, Federation of Earth Science Information Partners Winter Meeting, Building Innovation 2013, American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting, National Council on Science and the Environment National Conference, Climate Change and America's Infrastructure, Society for Range Management, North American Carbon Program All-Investigators' Meeting, American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, National Association of Marine Laboratory Directors, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies Water Policy Conference.

Events hosted by NCAnet partners during the public comment period include webinars focusing on specific regions and sectors, town hall meetings, and lecture series. Upcoming events are listed at <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov/partners/calendar>, and an archive of activities is available from <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov/partners/calendar/past-activities>.

In the meantime, NCA agency briefings have now been held for EPA, NOAA, NASA, DOD and DOI. A webinar briefing hosted by EPA on the regional climatologies and projected climate conditions for each region, attended by 300 federal employees across the US received rave reviews. The event was recorded and transcribed and is now available at: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/impacts-adaptation/adapt-tools/Jan2013-webcast.html>

Thanks to all who have attended and contributed to these meetings!

Climate science briefing in the Senate

On February 13, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, chaired by Barbara Boxer, hosted a briefing on climate science. Witnesses included two NCA report authors: Dr. Donald J. Wuebbles, Professor of Atmospheric Science, University of Illinois, and Dr. John M. Balbus, Senior Advisor for Public Health, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Other witnesses were Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd, President of the American Meteorological Society and Director for Program in Atmospheric Sciences, University of Georgia, and Dr. James J. McCarthy, Professor of Biological Oceanography, Harvard University. All reinforced the scientific findings of the NCA draft.

A video of the hearing is available at http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=cf67a715-fca1-8682-f7dd-13242e8035d1.



Review editors for the draft Third NCA report

Progress is under way in selecting the review editors for the NCA chapters. There will be at least one review editor for each chapter of the draft Third NCA report; their assignment is to ensure that the replies to comments by chapter author teams are responsive and accurate. The NCADAC chairs are selecting editors based on a number of criteria, including subject matter expertise, experience in document review, availability, and ability to conduct the review in a timely manner. A federal register notice was published requesting nominations; review editor suggestions also came from the National Academies; the American Geophysical Union; and earlier nominations for authors on chapters.

An update from NCAnet

NCAnet, the network of partners who work with the NCA to engage producers and users of assessment information across the United States, has had a great first year. The network has grown to over 80 partner organizations (the full list is available from <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov/partners>) and continues to add new partners each month. NCAnet partners meet monthly to discuss updates from the NCA, collaborate on joint activities, and identify new initiatives. Organizations interested in joining NCAnet may do so by visiting <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov/home/sign-up>.

NCAnet partners have made a tremendous effort to engage their own networks in the review of the draft Third NCA Report. In addition to reaching out to their members and stakeholders to alert them to the release of the draft, partners have helped plan and recruit participants for NCA town hall meetings, planned and implemented their own town halls, hosted webinars featuring NCA authors, written blog posts and newsletter articles for their own publications, and issued press releases and held briefing sessions about the draft report. Over the next several months, NCAnet partners will be shifting their focus to planning activities and developing communications and outreach materials related to the release of the Third NCA Report next year and engaging their networks in the sustained assessment process.

Staff changes

We are sad that **Anne Waple**, the valiant and talented chair/director of the NCA Technical Support Unit in Asheville, North Carolina, will be moving on to (mostly) greener pastures. The greener pasture part involves helping to build an adaptation initiative within 700 institutions of higher education through Second Nature (<http://www.secondnature.org/>). We know that she will do a great job in that capacity. The (mostly) greener part comes from the fact that she will also continue to support the NCA indirectly – on a half time basis – helping to manage the Global Change Information System (GCIS) within the US Global Change Research Program. Along with Curt Tilmes, a NASA detailee, Anne has been the major architect of the GCIS concept to date and we are very happy that she has chosen to continue in this role. It is imperative that the “front end” of the information system be user friendly and focused on decision support (informing adaptation, mitigation, and other forms of decisions). This is a highly complex task for a variety of reasons and requires integrated knowledge of decision processes, data systems, web design, etc. Since the “back end” of the system links (and makes interoperable) massive amounts of data, publications, tools, and references, it is important that the front end be truly accessible and logical to potential users! In spite of the fact that we will still be working with Anne, we will miss her in our day to day operations, where she has been a great leader and colleague.

Anne’s duties as leader of the Technical Support Unit have been taken over by **Dave Easterling**, a climate scientist with decades of experience working at NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) and with IPCC and the last two National Climate Assessments. Dave has most recently been working on



data related to the Special Report on Extremes for IPCC (<http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/>) and has been Chief of the Global Climate Applications Division since 2002. We are looking forward to working with Dave on the Third National Climate Assessment Report, making sure that the e-book format and website are fully functional, and establishing the sustained assessment process.

Other staff changes in the DC office include **Ralph Cantral**, our intrepid sectoral coordinator, who returned to NOAA for a new job in the Coastal Program; **Bill Emanuel**, the lead for Energy, Water-Energy-Land, Scenarios, etc., who returned to DOE last fall; and **Nancy Grimm**, NSF detailee, staff member and author on Ecosystems & Biodiversity and Urban Infrastructure & Vulnerability chapters, who returned to Arizona State University. We miss them all and thank them for their untold hours of hard labor. Fortunately, we have been joined by two talented staff members: **Susan Aragon-Long** (USGS) and **Alison Delgado** (DOE). Both have a broad portfolio of assignments and are a joy to work with. We were also recently joined by **Liz Fly**, a Knauss Fellow from NOAA who will support coastal assessment topics as well as a soon-to-be-initiated “International Context” Special Report. We look forward to working with Liz.

NEWS FROM THE US GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Release of USGCRP’s annual report – *Our Changing Planet*

On Friday, March 8th, 2013, the Administration’s interagency U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) delivered its annual report to Congress for fiscal year 2013: *Our Changing Planet*. The report highlights recent activities by 13 Federal agencies to strengthen our scientific understanding of global changes—including climate change—the threats and opportunities they present, and how they are likely to evolve over time. In addition, the *Our Changing Planet* report showcases tangible results of work carried out by USGCRP agencies, including, for example, some of the most detailed, data-rich maps of Alaskan permafrost ever generated; the most precise map ever produced of carbon stored in Earth’s tropical forests; critical information about the number and magnitude of extreme weather events in the United States; and updated maps that help gardeners and growers plan for harvesting seasons. The *Our Changing Planet* report for fiscal year 2013 can be found on USGCRP’s resources library <http://library.globalchange.gov/products/annualreports/our-changing-planet-2013>. In addition, details of the specific contributions described in OCPFY13 are illustrated in the recent White House blog; check it out at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/03/07/global-change-research-benefit-nation>.

First-ever federal agency adaptation plans released

Under Executive Order 13514, all federal agencies were required to submit a Climate Change Adaptation Plan as Appendix 1 of their 2012 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plans in June 2012. A total of 48 agencies submitted adaptation plans; the plans were released for public review on February 7th, 2013, beginning a 60-day public comment period that ends April 8th, 2013. Upon release of these documents, the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) began an analysis on how to best identify, quantify, and respond to the science needs that agencies explicitly identified in their adaptation plans. The plans can be found on: <http://sustainability.performance.gov/>.

Update from the US Carbon Cycle Science Program

4th North American Carbon Program (NACP) All-Investigators Meeting: USGCRP’s Carbon Cycle Science Interagency Working Group (CCIWG) and the US Carbon Cycle Science Program Office staff from USGCRP, Gyami Shrestha, helped organize and participated in the 4th North American Carbon



Program (NACP) All-Investigators Meeting (AIM4) in Albuquerque, NM, from February 4 to 7, 2013. Over 400 carbon cycle scientists from the US, Canada, Mexico and other nations attended the meeting. CCIWG co-chair Nancy Cavallaro (USDA) summarized the structure, functions, and priorities of the CCIWG and US Carbon Program with respect to how they align with the goals of the USGCRP and its evolving programmatic framework. A CCIWG and US Carbon Cycle Science Program Office panel discussion followed the CCIWG talk. Other sessions encompassed the current and future carbon budget for North America, approaches for communicating the science of climate change, and science information needs for decision makers and international negotiations, including talks by NOAA's Ko Barrett, and the National Climate Assessment's Kathy Jacobs. For more information about the meeting: http://www.nacarbon.org/meeting_2013/index.htm.

The NASA-Research Opportunities in Science of Earth and Space (ROSES) Carbon Cycle Science Solicitation, produced in collaboration with members of USGCRP's Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG) was released on 2/14/2013. Proposals to improve the understanding of changes in the distribution and cycling of carbon among the active land, ocean, and atmospheric reservoirs and how that understanding can be used to establish a scientific foundation for societal responses to global environmental change are being sought in alignment with the research agenda of the USGCRP (<http://www.globalchange.gov/>), its US Carbon Cycle Science Program (<http://www.carboncyclescience.gov/>), and the goals and objectives of the individual CCIWG agencies participating in this joint solicitation. The request for proposals can be accessed at: <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/solicitations/summary.do?method=init&solId={2EBEDEA0-817D-D318-55C3-BC5086A4AB70}&path=open>.