



# Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science (ACCCNRS)

June 11-12, 2014

The Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science (ACCCNRS or the Committee) met for the third time on June 11-12, 2014 at the Sheraton Premier at Tysons Corner in Vienna, VA. See Appendix A for a list of Committee members who attended this meeting.

## High Level Summary of Meeting Outcomes

- Based on discussion from the ACCCNRS meeting and feedback submitted by Committee members via e-mail, Meridian Institute will make initial suggested revisions to the draft ACCCNRS Report 2014 and will circulate the revised draft (Draft #2) to the Co-Leads of the four ACCCNRS Work Groups (WGs), and then to the full Committee for review and comment. Meridian Institute will then work with the four WGs to review proposed edits and develop Draft #3 of the report for distribution to the Committee prior to the September 2014 meeting. The expectation is that Draft #3 of the report will be discussed at that meeting with the aim of achieving a consensus outcome on the content of the report at that time.
- Based on discussion from the ACCCNRS meeting and feedback submitted by Committee members via e-mail, National Climate Change and Wildlife Center (NCCWSC) staff will revise the draft NCCWSC Strategic Plan and will work with the Program Evaluation WG in an iterative process to explore whether and how to best align the main headings of the Strategic Plan with the program evaluation framework that the Committee may be recommending for NCCWSC and the CSCs (also referred to as “the enterprise”) as a result of the work of the Program Evaluation WG.
- A group of Committee members and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) staff will arrange a conference call(s) to frame the issue(s) associated with downscaling, and, if appropriate, will draft a message or recommendation about a path forward for addressing this issue for the Committee’s consideration.

## Opening Remarks

*Thomas Iseman, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Water and Science, U.S. Department of the Interior*

Deputy Assistant Secretary Iseman provided opening remarks during which he stated that the Committee is providing a critically important perspective on how to help the NCCWSC and CSC enterprise achieve its goals of building partnerships, operationalizing solutions, and

sharing information with stakeholders. Mr. Iseman expressed his appreciation for the work and commitment of the Committee and said that he looks forward to further discussing the Committee's recommendations and how to implement them.

### **Overview of USGS Climate and Land Use Change Research and Development Program**

Debra Willard, USGS Climate and Land Use Change Research & Development Program (R&D Program) Coordinator, gave a presentation on the R&D Program. The Committee discussed the importance of coordination between the NCCWSC and CSCs, the R&D Program, and other programs within the Department of Interior (DOI). The slides Ms. Willard used to present this information can be found at [INSERT LINK](#).

### **Review and Discuss Draft NCCWSC and CSC Strategic Plan**

Emily Fort, NCCWSC Data and Information Manager, and Robin O'Malley, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Committee, and NCCWSC Policy and Partnership Coordinator, provided a brief overview of the draft NCCWSC Strategic Plan. The slides Ms. Fort and Mr. O'Malley used to present this information can be found at [INSERT LINK](#). The main points of feedback provided by individual Committee members are listed below:

- The Strategic Plan should be revised to include definitions of key terms; a description of mechanisms that will be used to collect feedback from partners and stakeholders on the quality of NCCWSC/CSC products; a plan for building long term relationships with partners; and concrete goals and strategies for achieving them.
- NCCWSC should request input from partners on the Strategic Plan.
- The Strategic Plan should name the specific boundary organizations it works with, and perhaps should identify the NCCWSC as a boundary organization itself.
- The Strategic Plan should address the extent to which the NCCWSC enterprise will produce actionable science and basic/foundational science and should emphasize co-production of science as a priority.
- The NCCWSC mission is narrower in scope than that of the CSCs. This "scope inversion" causes confusion, and the Committee should consider recommending that the Secretary either clarify the scopes of the NCCWSC and CSC missions or work with Congress to reconcile and align the scopes of their missions.

## Updates from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Regional Integrated Sciences & Assessments (RISA) Community

Adam Parris, Program Manager of the National and Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Regional Integrated Science and Assessments Program, provided updates on the following issues related to NCCWSC and the CSCs: recent discussions on best practices as NOAA finalizes a book on actionable climate science; recent progress on inter-agency and regional meetings with participation across relevant science programs; and, recent developments in tools and knowledge. The slides Mr. Parris used to present this information can be found at [INSERT LINK](#).

## Approach to Submission of Committee Findings and Recommendations

The Committee identified two types of recommendations that it could develop: 1) high-level, strategic recommendations on the operations, partnerships, and science of the NCCWSC and CSCs, and 2) tactical or operational recommendations on specific program activities and administration. Recommendations that are more strategic are likely to be formally submitted to the Secretary of Interior as noted in the ACCCNRS charter, while more operational suggestions can be provided directly to USGS staff, who can then report back to the Committee on implementation. It was suggested that in documents submitted to the Secretary and USGS staff, such as the ACCCNRS Report 2014, recommendations should be organized or marked in a way that clearly indicates who each recommendation is intended for.

## Review and Discussion of the ACCCNRS Report 2014

This section summarizes the key points of the Committee's discussion on the overall draft ACCCNRS Report 2014 and on the individual draft products and recommendations developed by the four ACCCNRS WGs: Actionable Science, Refining the Role of NCCWSC and CSCs in the Climate Services Landscape (Role), Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Matters (TIP), and Program Evaluation.

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## Overall Report

The following general feedback was provided by individual Committee members on the draft ACCCNRS Report 2014:

- The report needs to be revised so that it is written in one voice and is re-structured in a way that conveys the Committee's main messages clearly.
- The recommendations should be written more succinctly within the executive summary of the report, possibly as bolded key words or short phrases.
- Consider re-structuring according to different themes, such as "mission", "funding", etc.

- There should be a section at the beginning of the report that clarifies its intended applicability to DOI, its agencies, and its programs, as well as its relation/alignment with the NCCWSC Strategic Plan.
  - Terms such as “stakeholders,” “partners,” and “decision makers” need to be clearly defined and accurately applied throughout the report.
  - Terms such as “actionable science” and “co-production,” should be used consistently throughout the report, rather than their synonyms.
  - Some Committee members said the term “climate science services” is sensitive and should be replaced with a different term. Others said it is important to keep this term.
  - States and Tribes should be explicitly mentioned, rather than included in the general term “stakeholders,” where appropriate throughout the report and in the recommendations, because tribes are sovereign nations and states have trust responsibilities regarding species.
  - The Committee should consider how to evaluate implementation of the recommendations and whether to include a specific recommendation for doing so.
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## Actionable Science Recommendations and Product

The Actionable Science WG provided an overview of two draft recommendations to the Secretary as well as a draft document, “Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices for Co-producing Actionable Science.” The following key points were made by Committee members during discussion of the document:

- Recommendations #1 and #3 both suggest different primary missions for the NCCWSC and CSCs. These two should be blended and the relationship between “actionable science,” and “climate science services” should be explained. The WG should consider integrating Recommendation #9 with these, as well.
  - Several Committee members said CSCs should produce actionable science as a priority and also produce basic/foundational science if it is specifically asked for by stakeholders and can support the development of future actionable science or decision making.
  - One Committee member said the Committee should ask the Secretariat to go beyond distributing the “Guiding Principles...” and direct CSCs to use this guidance.
  - It was suggested that one statement in the How To Guide should be changed to reflect that vulnerability assessments are actionable if they identify causes of vulnerability.
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## Role of the NCCWSC and CSCs in the Climate Science Services Landscape

The Role of NCCWSC and CSCs in the Climate Science Services Landscape (Role) WG gave an overview of nine draft recommendations. Individual Committee members provided the following input:

- It was suggested that Recommendations #7 and #8, and possibly #6, be combined.
- Recommendation #6 could be revised to focus on the desired outcome of achieving coordination across federal departments and agencies, and rather than leading with the idea of developing a Memorandum of Understanding, list MOUs and other types of agreements as possible mechanisms for achieving this.
- Regional MOUs or operating agreements might be necessary to facilitate the sharing of resources and staff across CSCs, RISAs, LCCs, and USDA Hubs as referenced in Recommendation #7.
- A Committee member suggested including other DOI Bureaus within the recommendations about coordination.
- One Committee member suggested that NCCWSC provide the CSCs with guidance on FACA and what it does and does not allow in terms of seeking input from non-governmental stakeholders.

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## Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Matters Recommendations and Products

The TIP WG gave a brief presentation on two draft recommendations and the following two documents: “Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: A Primer,” prepared by a Committee member; and, “Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledges in Climate Change Initiatives,” prepared by an informal group comprised of two ACCCNRS Committee members, staff from multiple indigenous governments and organizations, and experts with experience working on issues concerning traditional knowledges. The Committee reviewed the TIP WG’s two draft recommendations and documents, and individual Committee members provided the following comments:

- The WG’s second draft recommendation should be revised so that it recognizes that DOI does not have control over how decision makers use information.
- Two federal members of the Committee said they would be interested in working with the authors to develop operational versions of the two documents, which could be shared with their staff. It would be helpful for all federal agencies to use consistent guidelines in their engagement with and outreach to tribes.
- There is a lack of direct interaction between CSC and LCC staff and tribal leaders; One option to address this would be to establish Tribal liaison positions at each CSC.
- The term “decision makers” in the TIP WG documents may refer to local and regional level decision makers rather than the federal level decision makers that the other WG documents refer to.

## Program Evaluation Recommendations and Product

The Program Evaluation WG provided an overview of draft recommendation and a framework for evaluation of the CSCs. Below are key points made by individual Committee members on the evaluation framework:

- The program evaluation framework of the NCCWSC and the NCCWSC Strategic Plan should be aligned with each other.
- Outreach, communications, and data management and infrastructure are both very important components of CSCs in terms of making an impact and could be built out more in the next iteration of the evaluation framework.
- There should be a method for collecting external input, such as from partners, stakeholders, and graduate students, for evaluation of the CSCs. Conducting surveys was one method mentioned for doing so, and it was suggested that social scientists would be needed to develop the surveys and determine who should be surveyed.
- The evaluation framework should take into account that CSCs do not have full control over the outcomes of some of the items included in the evaluation framework that involve other parties, such as partnerships and the co-production of science.
- Providing illustrative metrics within the framework is more helpful to NCCWSC and the CSCs than recommending detailed metrics.

### Public Comment

The comments below were made by members of the public.

*Adrienne Bartlewitz, USGS*

Ms. Bartlewitz suggested that the Committee consider how it might conduct outreach to the Hill about climate change and the CSCs. She said there were quite a few staff members on the Hill who are not familiar with the CSCs.

*Sam Teicher, Intern, White House Council on Environmental Quality*

Mr. Teicher expressed appreciation for the Committee's work and requested that Committee members send any input on the White House's Climate Resilience Toolkit and Climate Data Initiative to Paul Wagner.

### Work Plan 2014-2015

The Committee briefly reviewed the ACCCNRS work plan for 2014-2015, which includes the below items:

- Ensure that the Committee recommendations to convene meetings with tribal and indigenous peoples leaders and with large private landowners, developed at the September 2013 meeting, are implemented.
- Provide input on the priorities, and the processes for identifying the priorities, of the multi-CSC and NCCWSC science program;
- Provide feedback on the NCCWSC Strategic Plan;
- Complete the evaluation framework for the CSCs and the NCCWSC;
- Frame the issue(s) of downscaling within the climate science community;
- Submit the Committee’s work products and recommendations to the Secretary and USGS staff.

In addition, a Committee member suggested that the number of members representing business/private interests on the Committee be expanded prior to the end of the two- or three-year ACCCNRS membership cycles, which will fall in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

### Closing Remarks

David Behar thanked Sarah Ryker, Meridian Institute, and the Committee for their work and said he was impressed by the participation of the Committee members over the course of the two-day meeting. He also expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to align the ACCCNRS Report 2014 with the NCCWSC Strategic Plan. Sarah Ryker thanked the Committee members for their attendance and energy at the meeting. She said the Committee is helping to define a young program, improve operations within the Department of Interior, and solve issues within the federal family.

### Next Steps

Below is a list of steps for preparing the next iteration of the draft ACCCNRS Report 2014 and draft NCCWSC Strategic Plan for the Committee to discuss and revise as needed at the fourth ACCCNRS meeting on September 17-18, 2014.

Deadline	Task
Thur, June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee members will send any additional comments to Jeana Connaughton on the June 5 version of the ACCCNRS Report 2014.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee members will send comments to Robin O’Malley on “Coordinated Regional Research Networks for Climate Preparedness”</li> </ul>
Mon, June 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meridian will circulate compiled comments on Draft #1 of the ACCCNRS Report to the Committee.</li> <li>• NCCWSC will provide the Program Evaluation WG with a preliminary indication of the structure of the revised NCCWSC Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>

Deadline	Task
<b>Fri, June 27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Group Co-Leads Call (Time TBD) to review Draft #2 ACCCNRS Report</li> </ul>
<b>Wed, July 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee members will provide any additional feedback to Robin O'Malley on the draft NCCWSC Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Meridian will circulate the revised draft (Draft #2) of the ACCCNRS Report, along with the summary of the June meeting, to the Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Wed, Jul 2 - Fri, Aug 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WGs will conduct teleconferences to develop consensus on proposed revisions to their relevant section of Draft #2 of the ACCCNRS Report, and to reach agreement on how to respond to feedback received from Committee members after the June 2014 meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Wed, Aug 27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCWSC will circulate a revised draft of the NCCWSC Strategic Plan to the Committee.</li> <li>• USGS staff will provide information on NCCWSC and CSC budgets, current NCCWSC/CSC internal and external communication activities, and CSC Science Plans in advance of the September 2014 meeting, as requested by the Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Wed, Sept 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meridian will circulate Draft #3 of the ACCCNRS Report, which will include revisions agreed upon by WGs, to the Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Wed, Sept 17 - Thur, Sept 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee will discuss and revise the ACCCNRS Report (Draft #3) as needed, and discuss the revised draft NCCWSC Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>

# Appendix A

## Attendee List

June 11-12, 2014, ACCCNRS Meeting

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### Committee Members

David Behar, Co-chair, Climate Program Director, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission/Water Utility Climate Alliance

Paul Beier, President, Society for Conservation Biology, Member

Britta Bierwagen, Global Change Assessment Staff, Environmental Protection Agency, Alternate

David Cleaves, Climate Change Advisor to the Chief, US Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alternate

Natalie Dubois, Defenders of Wildlife, Alternate

Peter Frumhoff, Director of Science and Policy, Union of Concerned Scientists, Member

Kimberly Hall, Great Lakes Climate Change Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy, Member

Lynn Helbrecht, Climate Change Coordinator, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Member

William Hohenstein, Director, Climate Change Program Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Member

Larry Irwin, NCASI Fellow, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc., Member

Noah Matson, Vice President for Climate Change and Natural Resources Adaptation, Defenders of Wildlife, Member

Richard Merrick, Chief Science Advisor, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries, Member

Berrien Moore, Vice President, Weather and Climate and Director, National Weather Center, University of Oklahoma, Member

Gary Morishima, Technical Advisor to the Chairman, Quinault Nation, Member

John O'Leary, State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator, State of Massachusetts and the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Member

Adam Parris, RISA Program Manager, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Alternate

David Patte, Senior Advisor, Pacific region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alternate

Jeffrey Peterson, Senior Advisor, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Member

Robert Pietrowsky, Director, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Member

Bill Reeves, Chief of Biodiversity, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Alternate

Sarah Ryker, Co-Chair, Deputy Associate Director, U.S. Geological Survey, Member

Alessandra Score, Lead Scientist, EcoAdapt, Alternate

Bruce Stein, Director, Climate Change Adaptation, National Wildlife Federation, Member

Bradley Udall, Director of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment, University of Colorado, Member

Paul Wagner, Senior Environmental Scientist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alternate

Leigh Welling, Director Climate Change Program, U.S. National Park Service, Alternate

Jeffrey Williams, Manager, Climate Consulting, Entergy, Inc., Member

Sue Wotkyns, Climate Program Manager, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals and Northern Arizona University, Alternate

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### **Department of Interior and U.S. Geological Survey**

Thomas Iseman, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Water and Science, U.S. Department of the Interior

Deb Willard, Coordinator, Climate and Land Use Change Research & Development Program, USGS

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### **National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and Climate Science Centers**

Douglas Beard, Chief, NCCWSC

Shawn Carter, Senior Scientist, NCCWSC

Emily Fort, Data and Information Manager, NCCWSC

Robin O'Malley, Policy and Partnership Coordinator, NCCWSC

Kim Winton, Director, South Central Climate Science Center

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### **Meridian Staff**

Rianne BeCraft, Project Assistant, Meridian Institute

Jean Connaughton, Project Coordinator, Meridian Institute

Tim Mealey, Senior Partner, Meridian Institute

Jennifer Pratt Miles, Senior Mediator, Meridian Institute

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