

**NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 14 & 15, 2012
SILVER SPRING, MD**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2012 – NCADAC MEETING, DAY 1

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF THE AGENDA, GOALS FOR THE MEETING

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo welcomed the NCADAC, thanked the NCA staff and requested approval of an amended agenda for the meeting. The changes to the agenda resulted from a decision not to proceed with a consensus discussion to approve the draft NCA 2013 report at this time, and to end this meeting at noon on Thursday. The timeline decision was reviewed by the chairs after consultation with the Executive Secretariat on Tuesday, November 13; Dr. Melillo indicated that an alternative timeline and approval schedule would be presented for consideration at this meeting.

Decision

The NCADAC approved the revised agenda by consensus. In addition, Dr. Melillo requested and received approval for Ms. Kathy Jacobs, NCA Director, and Dr. Anne Waple, the NOAA Technical Support Unit Manager, to freely participate in the discussions.

STATUS OF THE 2013 REPORT AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Ms. Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Jerry Melillo indicated that one of the reasons for the proposed revised schedule was a concern that many NCADAC members had not had sufficient time to read the latest draft, which had been posted on October 29. The quality of the report is imperative and should not be compromised. All issues raised by NCADAC members must be discussed and addressed, and there is a need to make sure the authors have agreement on issues. Concerns were expressed about consistency across the report, and how to achieve that when the climate science chapter is still in flux and multiple people are commenting and suggesting changes simultaneously. Conversations regarding the draft have involved more than 300 people, which takes time. As late as last week, it was expected that there would be a near-final draft for approval at the November 2012 meeting (consistent with the scenario 2 timeline). However, the schedule is now in scenario 3 after consultation with Executive Secretariat and NCA staff, with a revised timeline for release of report and follow-on tasks.

At the request of Jerry Melillo, Kathy Jacobs provided an overview of the proposed new timeline, which was developed by the Executive Secretariat. Ms. Jacobs reviewed the draft timeline with the group; there were numerous suggested changes that were agreed to by consensus. It was agreed that the “50-Page Summary” report topic needed more discussion on Day 2 of the meeting.

The highlights of the new proposed schedule included:

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- The due date for NCADAC comments with suggested responses and for resolution of outstanding issues will be November 27;
- CLAs approve the new draft by December 14;
- Final comments on issues that would prevent coming to consensus (no new comments allowed on unchanged material) are due Jan 4;
- NCADAC Consensus Decision on the release of the draft is January 11; public release Jan 14; and the final NCA Report release 3/15/2014 (report will still be delivered to EOP by December 2013).

Discussion

Concerns were expressed about whether the NOAA regional climate scenario document approval process would impact the timeline, whether that process could occur more quickly, and whether the revised timeline dates are truly firm. Another commenter noted that during the two-month agency review period it will be imperative for the agencies to work on solutions to their comments in real time if this timeline is going to work. There were also concerns about whether the extended timeline would have a negative impact on the sustained assessment process, since many view the sustained process itself as being at least as important as the completion of the 2013 report.

Decision

The NCADAC approved the new timeline by consensus. There was a request that this new schedule be formally transmitted to NOAA and OSTP, to request written confirmation of their support of this new timeline. A note is also needed to CLAs about the timeline, explaining the changes, and implications for public meetings before the draft is approved.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES WITH THE CURRENT DRAFT REPORT

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Ms. Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Although most critical “showstopper” topics have already been resolved to the satisfaction of the CLAs, (for example, an agreed-upon approach to describing projected sea level rise over this century and a way of addressing the use of CMIP3 and CMIP5 models), there are still some outstanding issues such as the use of the words “heat trapping gases” vs. “greenhouse gases.” A major discussion of the benefits of each resulted in the conclusion that “greenhouse gases” is more commonly used in the scientific (and regulatory) community and is more appropriately used in the more technical aspects of the report, while “heat trapping gases” may be a more meaningful way to communicate with the public.

Decision

The NCADAC concluded that both terms (“heat trapping gases” vs. “greenhouse gases”) are acceptable, though it would be advantageous to promote better understanding of what greenhouse gases are by using both in the beginning of chapters, e.g., (“greenhouse gases, also referred to in this report as heat-trapping gases”). The use of an electronic glossary, perhaps a “mouse-over” definition of key words, should be considered.

Discussion

Another issue of concern was a perception on the part of some NCADAC members that changes have been made to the chapters without the consent of the CLAs. Although staff has assisted CLAs in developing responses to comments received, in all cases those changes were provided as suggestions,

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and CLAs have had the option of accepting, rejecting or modifying the wording in those suggestions. Notably, in cases where an issue is a “showstopper” issue for someone on the NCADAC, the staff has worked with the CLAs and the commenters to move towards compromise language that is acceptable to all. The CLAs will have final signoff on the chapter language, and they will be asked to provide their sign-off via email (at least one CLA per chapter) by December 14.

Other general observations of note were that chapters are not equally “self-contained,” meaning some can easily stand on their own while others are very dependent on other chapters. It was further observed that this is not a problem in an electronic version where the links are included, but may not work well if the chapters are read as standalone documents. It was also suggested that the report be more forthcoming about some of the important topics that are NOT covered, including implications of climate change for manufacturing and services sectors, which produce 50% of GDP. There was also a request for more emphasis across the chapters on observed changes, which are not as visible in this report as they were in 2009, while there is much more evidence now. A matrix of regional observed impacts with a related graphic is anticipated, and there is support for more summary material/graphics like those in 2009 report in the draft 2013 document.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Dr. Kandis Wyatt, NOAA NESDIS, Designated Federal Official (Alternate)

Kandis Wyatt opened the public comment period. Dr. Amanda Staudt of the National Wildlife Federation provided her perspective on the activities of the NCA Network (NCAnet), which consists of more than 60 organizations that partner with the NCA to provide science and communications support (see Appendix B for the text of her comments). There were no other comments; Dr. Wyatt closed the public comment period and the meeting adjourned for lunch at 11:55 am.

REPORT DISCUSSION AND CONTINUING PROCESS

Ms. Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director
Dr. Anne Waple, NOAA National Climatic Data Center
Dr. Susanne Moser, NCADAC member and Executive Committee member
Ms. Emily Cloyd, US Global Change Research Program

Sustained Assessment Process Overview:

Kathy Jacobs provided a brief overview of the status and components of the sustained assessment process. In addition to the development of the NCADAC report, there are a number of foundational activities that are already under way at USGCRP as anticipated in the USGCRP 10 Year Strategic Plan. In building the operating plan for the sustained assessment, proposed “foundational efforts” and “special report topics” have been developed. A “Proposed Special Report Topics” memo was approved at the August NCADAC meeting and has been discussed and amended in response to conversations with the USGCRP Principals. Some of these sustained assessment activities are already underway, such as the development of the Indicators and the Global Change Information System, while others are still in the “scoping” phase. Those still being scoped include the approach to building scenarios for a variety of applications, a potential assessment of how to evaluate the costs of climate impacts vs. the costs of climate adaptation, a study of food security, and a study of the international context of the NCA.

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Discussion

Questions were asked about the availability of resources for the sustained assessment process and the process and criteria for decisions on priorities at USGCRP and NCADAC. Jacobs said that the USGCRP agencies are each committed in different and flexible ways, including providing staff and in-kind support for these efforts. Seven agencies agreed to support the NCA on an ongoing basis in a memo to OMB. One way to sustain the NCA process is to make sure that its activities are useful to agencies, and so far this approach seems to be succeeding. Another aspect is harvesting volunteer support and scientific information through NCAnet, the 60 scientific and professional organizations that have pledged to assist, as well as through the NCA's own network of regional and sectoral authors. The current process for establishing priorities for the Sustained Process is outlined in the "Proposed Topics" document that will be re-distributed.

Several members requested more context for this conversation since the sustained assessment activities have not been as visible to some members as the 2013 report development. A handout or "welcome packet" for new members and a set of reference documents that includes the standard NCA slides and today's Sustained Assessment slide set were suggested.

Sustained Assessment Special Report:

Anne Waple provided an overview of the status of the Special Report. The NCADAC decided in September to produce this as the first special NCA report, providing advice to the government as required by the NCADAC Charter. It will be developed in the spring of 2013, with the intent that it be completed before the release of the final version of the NCA report. An outline and timeline had been shared previously; at the Executive Secretariat meeting November 13 a list of authors and alternates was generated. That list will be circulated to see if there are objections or additional suggestions, with the NCADAC given one week to respond. After consideration of those responses the Executive Secretariat will launch the author team and provide them with the proposed schedule and outline. The outline can be amended by the authors as needed.

Discussion

There was a question about why new authors need to be selected when there is a set of authors that have already been selected and have written the Sustained Assessment chapter in the NCA report. In response, Anne Waple pointed out some of the previous authors are not interested in continuing in this role, and there is concern about having too many federal employees involved in a report advising the government. There is a need to keep this author team small since the timeline is tight. In addition, some questioned the need for a review process on a federal advisory committee report; but it was pointed out that this is actually common. There was a question about the intent of referring to the Special Report document that is not yet written within the NCA 2013 report and the implications of doing this; small clarifications may be added to the draft 2013 NCA Report.

Decision

The NCADAC approved by consensus the Sustained Assessment Special Report proposal, the outline, timeline and author selection approach.

Plan for Responding to Comments:

Anne Waple provided an overview of the plan for responding to public comments during the review process for the 2013 report, including a description of the online comment system.

Discussion

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There was a discussion of whether the identity of the commenters should or should not be withheld from the authors during the response period. NCADAC members pointed out a number of pros and cons associated with full disclosure of the identity of the commenters vs. anonymous comment (in all cases releasing the names of the commenters along with their comments at the time the report is released).

Decision

The NCADAC approved by consensus that the issue of the anonymity of commenters should be added to the agenda for additional discussion/decision on Day 2.

Engagement Process During Public Comment Period:

Susi Moser, NCADAC member, and Emily Cloyd of the NCA staff provided an update on the plans for engagement during the public review period for the NCA draft. There are three main purposes of these activities – to encourage awareness of the draft report, to maintain important relationships with regional and sectoral networks that have developed in the process of developing technical input reports and chapters for the NCA, and to promote review comments and to encourage participation in the sustained assessment process. Approximately 20 events have been planned, some at professional society meetings like those of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the American Meteorological Society (AMS), while others are regional town halls in each of eight NCA regions. With the change in the release date there will be a change in strategy regarding what authors can say about the findings of the NCADAC – the findings cannot be cited prior to the release, but some of the events are scheduled in December. Clear guidance will be given to all authors presenting during these meetings.

Working Groups:

Kathy Jacobs provided an overview of the current status of NCADAC working groups, noting that while some have completed their assignments, several others are still very active, and a few have been authorized but are not yet functioning. There is a need to assess how many working groups are needed and can be supported in light of the sustained assessment products and author teams that are now being launched. It is possible that NCAnet and the Sustained Assessment Working Group/Author team are already fulfilling some of the anticipated functions of the newly established working groups (regional and sectoral sustained assessment team support and adaptation/mitigation/decision support). This item needs more discussion but there was inadequate time to pursue the topic further.

SUMMARY OF THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo summarized the day's activities.
The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2012 – NCADAC MEETING, DAY 2

WELCOME AND REVIEW OF PREVIOUS DAY

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo called the meeting to order at 8:45 am and listed the items for discussion for the day, including indicators, the discussion of identification or anonymity for review comments, the 50-page Summary document, comments from Bull Bennett on the sustained process, the Ambassadors Proposal, and revisiting the near-term timeline.

REPORT DISCUSSION AND CONTINUING PROCESS

Dr. Tony Janetos, Joint Global Change Research Institute

Dr. Melissa Kenney, US Global Change Research Program

Dr. Gary Yohe, Wesleyan University

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Dr. Bull Bennett, Kiksapa Consulting

Indicators:

Tony Janetos gave a presentation on the NCADAC Indicators Workgroup's approach to building the National Indicators System – this is an ambitious effort directly supported by a number of USGCRP agencies. The timeline includes deploying a subset of “pilot” indicators along with the launch of the GCIS, while also developing a more robust set of indicators that give a useful view of changing conditions within and between social, physical and ecological systems in the US. Dr. Melissa Kenney is the full-time manager of the indicator development process and is now assisted by four interns. Managers of existing indicators systems within government agencies, NGOs and the private sector are engaged and the working group is very active. There are indicators available for most of the topics that are needed, but indicators of progress in adaptation and mitigation are very rudimentary at this time. Initial indicators are leveraging existing work (and thus are very low cost), with the potential for investments in new indicators in the future. It was suggested that the indicators group connect with some of the author teams, e.g., Energy, for input since they identified indicator needs in their chapter. The indicator item was presented for information only but the NCADAC was generally supportive of the approach.

Plan for Responding to Comments (continues from Day 1):

Discussion

As a continuation of the discussion from Day 1, Gary Yohe led a consensus building discussion regarding the issue of whether or not to disclose the name of public commenters during the period that responses to public comments are being prepared. Some members noted that knowing the identity of the commenter would assist them in understanding the comment and in responding with the appropriate level of scientific knowledge. Others noted that anonymity might prevent bias in responding. Scientific publication review relies on anonymity while the IPCC process prefers for the commenters' identities to be known.

Decision

After a lengthy discussion, the NCADAC decision by consensus was that the names of the commenters should not be disclosed to the authors and review editors, but the names of the commenters will be published in association with the comments and responses when the final report is released.

50 Page Summary Document:

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Jerry Melillo provided a proposed approach and rationale for the 50-page Summary document. This NCADAC document will be focused on communicating major findings in a highly graphic format, and be based largely on the Executive Summary of the NCA report. It will be totally derivative of the main report, and go through agency and Executive Office of the President (EOP) review. A primary purpose is communicating with Congress, whose members are likely to want a paper version for easy access in addition to the full electronic book (Ebook) version.

Discussion

It was noted that a number of additional handouts might be needed. For example, 2-page summaries for regions and sectors were very useful for the release of the 2009 report. USGCRP could produce these products rather than the NCADAC if needed.

Decision

The NCADAC decided by consensus that the specifics of the 50-page Summary will be reconsidered at the January meeting. There was a request to create a timeline for the 50-page Summary, with emphasis on working in the public comment review period. The Chairs of the NCADAC, science writers and staff have primary responsibility for producing a first draft of the 50-page Summary. The document will be reviewed and approved by the full NCADAC.

Comments on the Sustained Assessment Process:

Kathy Jacobs introduced Bull Bennett, mentioning that there are important challenges with maintaining engagement with the regional, sectoral and cross-sectoral networks that have been built. The issues associated with sustaining the Tribal and Native Nations efforts are a major example of this problem. Engagement with these networks, along with building the capacity to support more useful and regular synthesis reports, is critical to the success of the Sustained Assessment.

Dr. Bennett described how broadly and deeply engaged the Tribes and Native Nations have become in the NCA process, and how important it is to stay engaged with networks like ITEP, the Intertribal Environmental Professionals network. However, the entire NCA Tribal network is currently coordinated by Bennett personally – and this is not a sustainable situation. There is a need for serious consideration of a more sustainable model. A number of tribal organizations would be willing to support the NCA on an ongoing basis if some limited amount of funding were available for coordination and technical input development.

Discussion

It was suggested that Dr. Bennett ask if the Tribal and Native Nations are willing to join NCAnet, which is explicitly designed to be a “network of networks” to help support engagement. However, it is likely that more investment is required, given the vulnerability of the Tribal and Native Nations and the benefits to all involved to provide for better science support and data collection, including indigenous knowledge, on Tribal lands.

Decision

The NCADAC agreed by consensus that the Sustained Assessment Special Report team and/or the Sustained Assessment Working Group should directly address this issue/proposal in the context of supporting the process and should provide recommendations to the NCADAC.

Ambassadors Program:

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Jerry Melillo briefly introduced the concept of the Ambassadors Program, which is an engagement effort focused on the final 2013 report. Phase I (the planning phase) is being funded by the Energy Foundation and is likely to be carried out by the non-governmental organization Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES, formerly the Pew Center for Climate Change), next spring; the concept is to work with high level opinion leaders in a bipartisan or non-partisan context help bring visibility of the final report to new audiences that the NCADAC doesn't otherwise have access to. Dr. Melillo will circulate a short summary of the Ambassadors Program to the NCADAC.

NEXT STEPS AND WRAP-UP

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo pointed out that a new version of the Climate Science chapter would be available by the end of the day on Friday, November 16, and that new versions of the Introduction and Mitigation Chapters are anticipated to be uploaded soon. Otherwise all chapters are already available on the resources site for review and comments are due by November 27 and there is a summary of comments and response status available as well. Comments should be accompanied with suggested solutions – proposed language, etc. The names of the proposed Special Report authors will be circulated this week, and a revised version of the timeline will be sent out to the members along with the meeting summary.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.

APPENDIX A: ATTENDEES

Non-Federal NCADAC Members in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Abbasi	GameChange Capital, LLC
Ginger Armbrust	University of Washington
Bull Bennett	Kiksapa Consulting
Rosina Bierbaum	PCAST, University of Michigan
James (Jim) Buizer	University of Arizona
Lynne Carter	Louisiana State University
F. Stuart (Terry) Chapin	University of Alaska
Camille Coley	Florida Atlantic University
Jan Dell	CH2MHill
Placido dos Santos	University of Arizona
Guido Franco	California Energy Commission
David Gustafson	Monsanto Company
David Hales	Second Nature
Sharon Hays	Computer Sciences Corporation
Tony Janetos	Joint Global Change Research Institute
Arthur Lee	Chevron Corporation
Jo-Ann Leong	University of Hawaii
Diana Liverman	University of Arizona
Rezaul Mahmood	Western Kentucky University
Ed Maibach	George Mason University
Michael McGeehin	RTI International
Jerry Melillo	Marine Biological Laboratory
Susanne Moser	Susanne Moser Research & Consulting
Phil Mote	Oregon State University
Jayantha Obeysekera	South Florida Water Management District
Marie O'Neill	University of Michigan
John Posey	East-West Gateway Council of Governments
Sara Pryor	Indiana University
Terese (T.C.) Richmond	Van Ness Feldman
Henry (Gerry) Schwartz	HGS Consultants, LLC
Joel Smith	Stratus Consulting
Don Wuebbles	University of Illinois
Gary Yohe	Wesleyan University

Federal NCADAC Ex-Officio Members in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Ko Barrett	NOAA
Virginia Burkett	U.S. Department of the Interior
John Hall	Department of Defense
Alice Hill	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Bill Hohenstein	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Pat Jacobberger-Jellison	NASA

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Thomas Karl	NOAA/Subcommittee on Global Change Research
George Luber	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Andy Miller	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Robert O'Connor	National Science Foundation
Susan Ruffo	White House Council on Environmental Quality
Arthur Rypinski	U.S. Department of Transportation

USGCRP, NOAA, and NCA Staff in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Susan Aragon-Long	USGCRP (USGS)
Elizabeth Ban	NOAA
Sarah Champion	NOAA
Emily Cloyd	USGCRP
Alison Delgado	USGCRP (JGCRI)
Bryce Golden-Chen	USGCRP
Kathy Jacobs	USGCRP (OSTP)
Melissa Kenney	USGCRP (NOAA)
Ken Kunkel	NOAA
Fred Lipschultz	USGCRP (NASA)
Glynis Lough	USGCRP
Tom Maycock	NOAA
Brooke Stewart	NOAA
Anne Waple	NOAA
Kandis Wyatt	NOAA

Other attendees

Name	Affiliation
Dan Glick	Independent
Susan Hassol	Climate Communication
Alice Jacobsohn	Environmental Industry Associates
Collin Quinn	NOAA
Amanda Staudt	National Wildlife Federation

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Amanda Staudt, Senior Scientist, Climate and Energy Program, National Wildlife Federation

The NCAnet has continued to meet on a nearly monthly basis since last spring and now include more than 60 members. In addition, several smaller affinity groups have formed and convened focused conversations on subjects such as the built environment, communications, and ecosystems and conservation.

NCAnet partners have already made tremendous contributions to the process. Example activities include hosting listening sessions and climate conversations, serving as authors on technical input reports, publishing technical input reports, and speaking at professional society meetings about their technical input reports and about NCAnet. There are several efforts underway now to use these technical input reports in a variety of outreach activities. These reports have mostly been released without fanfare (or not released at all), even though they represent significant contributions of the research community and investments of taxpayer resources.

The NCAnet partners also have strong interest in commenting on the draft report and facilitating getting more eyes on the draft. As the public review period approaches, the NCAnet partners are pleased to see that the agencies are convening several town halls to engage specific stakeholders and the general public. Several NCAnet partners are already helping to plan these events and to recruit participants. NCAnet partners have also been identifying opportunities for discussion of the draft report in their own meetings, webinars, newsletters, etc. I should emphasize that uncertainty about the timing and other details hampers the ability to partner groups to meaningfully engage, so I urge the committee to put firm plans in place as soon as possible, and share the timeline widely.

Several NCAnet partners have expressed concern about the apparent lack of a clear media strategy for the release of the draft report. Being prepared for the media and providing them with information and background for the draft NCA release will help drive comments during the public comment period, and raise awareness about the inclusive nature of the NCA. In contrast, being media-shy about the report or inadequately prepared for media engagement about the release may invite speculation and leave the door open for attacks on the credibility of the process and products. For example, releasing a report on a Saturday sends a message of trying to bury the report.

This draft report is going to be covered by the media. I strongly urge the NCA to proactively manage the release to ensure that the messages you want to be conveyed are those that are included in the initial media coverage. This release is an excellent opportunity to remind the media and the general public that this is a draft, that you welcome feedback on it, that you want it to address issues of national significance (which is why you are seeking feedback), that you will carefully consider the comments during revisions, and that this sort of dialogue about climate impacts is important for so many issues that face our nation.

I'd like to conclude by saying that the inclusive and broad-based approach that this NCA process has charted is a huge improvement on past assessments. Proactively engaging the public through intentional media outreach and a robust review process is an important part of living up to this aspiration.