

Webinar Summary Report: Coastal Effects National Chapter

Introduction

The Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4), currently in development, will assess the science of climate change and its impacts across the United States. It will document climate change-related impacts and responses for various sectors and regions, with the goal of better informing public and private decision-making at all levels.

To ensure that the assessment is informed by and useful to stakeholders, engagement activities were planned for many of the 17 National Chapters. These activities provided stakeholders an opportunity to provide input to and exchange ideas with the chapter author team on key message formulation, share relevant resources, and give individual feedback on issues of importance to the chapter topic.

Webinar Structure

National chapter webinars were organized and hosted by the coordinating lead authors (CLA) and chapter leads (CL) with coordination from NCA4 staff from the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). Invitations to the webinars were distributed by the hosts, author team, and USGCRP staff to their stakeholder networks.

Coastal Effects Engagement Webinar

On February 28, 2017, the NCA4 Coastal Effects chapter team held a public engagement webinar. The objectives of the webinar were to gather input from stakeholders, including authors of the regional chapters, to help inform the writing and development of NCA4, and to raise awareness of the process and timeline for NCA4.

Chapter Author Team

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Matt Dzaugis, USGCRP staff

Fred Lipschultz, USGCRP staff

Apurva Dave, USGCRP staff

Overview and Topics of Discussion

Juliette Finzi Hart opened the webinar and introduced USGCRP staff. Apurva Dave, International Coordinator and Senior Analyst for NCA, gave an overview of USGCRP, the structure of NCA4, and timeline for completion.

Jessica Whitehead provided detailed notes on the sustained assessment process and highlighted new additions to NCA4. Juliette Finzi Hart led the remainder of the webinar and provided general information on NCA4 sectoral chapters including:

- Integration of sectoral and regional chapters
- Overlapping topics and major themes
- Sectoral chapters (Coasts, etc.) as high-level overview
- Importance of engagement with regional chapters
- Identification of National themes
- Development of Traceable Accounts

Additionally, the draft NCA4 Coastal Effects chapter outline was presented with requests for comments and direction. The proposed outline of the chapter (subject to change as the chapter is developed) was presented as follows:

- Section 1: Overview of national “state of the sector” as it relates to climate change
- Section 2: Regional roll-up to national level
- Section 3: National-scale Key Messages
- Technical inputs, USGCRP products, and resources for authors
- Potential Discussion Topics / focal areas

Key Takeaways

Participants raised questions and provided comments regarding regional connections, research gaps, social and cultural sensitivity, and technical support. Key takeaways from each of these are listed below.

Regional Connections

- Agriculture in the coastal plain was left out of the key messages but was brought up several times in the Southwest Regional Engagement Workshop (REW) and is important in the Southeast region as well. These are potential regions to connect with more.
- Agriculture in the coastal plain connects with economics and socioeconomics.

Research Gaps

- The connection between sea level rise and insurance was identified as a research gap, specifically addressing the question of how the insurance companies are thinking about sea level rise and shoreline change.
- The correct definition of wastewater, including both public wastewater and onsite septic (i.e. Outer Banks) was discussed.

Social and Cultural Sensitivity

- How will the authors distinguish between cultural and social vulnerability and how will this topic be approached and managed? This is a tricky and sensitive topic as populations may be considered vulnerable by an index but may not consider themselves vulnerable. Social networks are also a component of vulnerability and may be important.

Technical Support

- Participants requested information on the Regional Engagement Workshops, and clarified call-in options. Participants saw the importance of engaging the regions to help develop the key messages.