

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

1 May 2003, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Eisenhower Room

Names of absent members are indicated in italics.

Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair
John Filson (USGS), Vice-Chair for Science
Margaret Lawless (FEMA), Vice-Chair for Policy

Working Group Chairs

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group
Rosalind Helz (USGS), Co-Chair
Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair

International Working Group

Larry Roeder, Jr. and
Fernando Echavarria (State), Co-Chair
Larry Weber (NSF), Co-Chair

Designated Representatives

CDC

Josephine Malilay

DOD

Earnest Paylor

EPA

Peter Jutro

Regan Murray (alternate)

FEMA

Margaret Lawless

FERC

Dan Mahoney

HUD

John Kennedy

Kevin Sheehan (alternate)

NASA

Steve Ambrose

NIST

Shyam Sunder

Noel Raufaste (alternate)

NOAA

Helen Wood

NRO

Keith Fennell

Duane Snow (alternate)

NSF

Priscilla Nelson

OHS

Bill Jeffrey

OMB

Erin McCartney

Gary Reisner

Jason Freihage

OSTP

Gene Whitney

State

Fernando Echavarria

Larry Roeder, Jr.

USACE

Michael O'Connor

USCG

Ernesto Montijo

USFS

Sue Conard

US Public Health Office

Eric Noji

USGS

Tim Cohn

Other Attendees

NASA

Craig Dobson

NOAA

Chris Lewis (NESDIS/IA)

John Gaynor (USWRP)

Margaret McCalla

Peter Colohan (GRS)

NSF

Dennis Wenger

USACE

Andy Bruzewicz

USGS

Kathleen Gohn

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Approval of Summary from Last Meeting
10:10 Report from the Chair
10:25 Report from the OSTP Liaison
10:40 Grand Challenge
11:00 Update, Fire Research Council
11:10 Interim Report
11:20 Working Group, Remote Sensing Applications
11:40 Working Group, International
12:00 Close

Handouts

Agenda
Minutes, April 2003 Meeting
Minutes, March 2003 Meeting
Proposal, Membership Modification
Proposal, Letter to the President
Proposal, Invitation to Special IWG Meeting
Proposal, SDR 2004 Meeting Dates
Fire Research Coordinating Council Materials
Grand Challenge Materials
CENR Interim Report Clearance Summary
Sample Contribution to the International Paper
USGS Earthquake Hazards Program in NEHRP
ISDR Materials: CDs

Call to Order

Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

Summary of Discussion

1. Report from the Chair

Chair Helen Wood (NOAA) began her report with a discussion of Andy Bruzewicz's (USACE) proposal to bring additional individuals to the SDR to represent the social sciences. Ms. Wood noted that SDR members have not yet come to a decision on this idea, especially with respect to the inclusion of individuals who are not part of the federal government. The SDR is not prepared to expand the group to include non-governmental entities or individuals, but members should give some thought to the information those individuals and entities could provide. SDR members agreed to table the discussion until the next meeting because Andy Bruzewicz was not present. In the interim, members agreed that it is important to identify appropriate agencies and experts and to invite those experts to brief the SDR. Ms. Wood noted that the Hazards Research and Applications Workshop in Boulder this July provides an interesting opportunity to engage with the social science community. Dennis Wenger (NSF), a social scientist with NSF, added that it may be appropriate to include an economist from the USGS on the Subcommittee.

Action: Members to identify experts and agencies with interests in the social science aspects of disaster reduction and invite experts to future meetings.

Action: Secretariat to include discussion of Andy Bruzewicz's proposal in the June meeting agenda.

Ms. Wood announced that she has been asked to chair a panel at the Boulder Hazards Research and Applications Workshop this July. The panel, entitled "A Disaster Resistant America: Reducing Disaster Risks Through Effective Collaboration," will discuss successes in interagency collaboration while examining the implications of the new Department of Homeland Security for disaster reduction practices. Several distinguished individuals have agreed to participate on the panel, among them are Gene Whitney (Office of Science and Technology Policy, National Science and Technology Council Liaison to the SDR) and Bill Hooke (American Meteorological Society, Chair of the National Research Council Disasters Forum).

The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) sponsored Earth Observations Summit invitations have been distributed. The purpose of the Summit is to create effective integrated earth observations for improved monitoring of the planet, with disaster reduction included as a primary application area. As chair of the SDR, Ms. Wood is the SDR liaison to the CENR Earth Observations Task Force and receives all notices and meeting invitations. Ms. Wood proposed a related Earth Observations Forum as a topic for the Fall 2003 National Research Council Disasters Forum. If there is interest, the Forum and the resulting report may be organized in cooperation with the SDR. SDR members agreed to co-sponsor the Earth Observations Forum, and will create an ad hoc working group to prepare for this Forum and other actions related to the Summit.

Action: Ms. Wood to call an initial meeting of an ad hoc task force to coordinate inputs and support the CENR Earth Observations Task Force and to provide advice and support for the anticipated fall National Academy of Sciences Disasters Roundtable Forum on Integrated Earth Observing Systems to Support Disaster Reduction. SDR members to attend the initial meeting or identify other agency reps. The output of the organizing meeting will be a draft charter for the task force, including membership, objectives, mode of operation, and expected duration.

The SDR web site is complete and will be available at <http://sdr.gov> by Friday, May 16.

Action: Secretariat will send out email announcement when the web site is fully accessible. Secretariat will coordinate the next round of site updates, to include additional material from the original USGS site as well as links to information about Public Private Partnership 2000.

Ms. Wood ended her report with a discussion of upcoming meeting dates. The November 2003 meeting, originally scheduled for November 13, will now be held November 6. The 2004 meeting schedule was distributed, and members asked that the information be emailed as well. Proposed 2004 meeting dates:

January 8, 2004	July 8, 2004
February 5, 2004	August 5, 2004
March 4, 2004	September 9, 2004
April 1, 2004	October 7, 2004
May 6, 2004	November 4, 2004
June 3, 2004	December 2, 2004

Action: Secretariat to send out email announcement listing proposed 2004 meeting dates.

2. Comments from OSTP liaison

Dr. Whitney offered several comments related to the Earth Observation Summit, noting that OSTP Director Dr. Marburger supports the idea, but has raised concerns about the current state of integration of U.S. platforms: Do we have an integrated plan for the U.S. System? Are we really prepared to deal with an international plan? With those questions in mind, Dr. Whitney did a little bit of research. Among other things, Dr. Whitney identified two issues:

1. ***In situ* measurements.** While the remote-sensing community is relatively well organized and coordinated, and integration is improving, cooperative sharing arrangements for *in situ* measurements are not as well developed. The U.S. Government does not have a coherent *in situ* sharing strategy. Agencies are required to make data available, but the advocacy for *in situ* is much less robust and much less organized than on the remote-sensing side.
2. **Passive vs. Strategic Data Sharing.** Currently, earth observation data is not collected in a strategic way, but grows from the bottom up based in agency-specific projects. Even when there is a strategy (i.e. for ocean or climate), the data collection is highly focused for scientific research purposes, and is not necessarily conducive to monitoring. The U.S. Government lacks a refined strategy for developing a standard set of measurements and collecting earth observing data for monitoring purposes.

Ms. Wood asked if the task force under CENR is addressing these questions as one of their functions, because the SDR does not want to duplicate efforts, especially with our parent committee. She noted that these are exactly the issues we should discuss in a task group of the SDR. In fact, the contest to create integrated, large-scale monitoring could eventually become an SDR Grand Challenge.

With respect to Public Warning, Mr. Whitney announced that the National Weather Service did not receive funding to improve public warnings under the war supplemental legislation. This may create an effective opening at a later time for the SDR to weigh in on the issue of public warnings. Priscilla Nelson (NSF) also noted that the social science community was disappointed with the legislation's lack of consideration of the extensive research on the subject of public warning.

Dennis Wenger commented that the topic of public warnings was so well researched in the 1970s and 1980s that social scientists thought they had the issue well covered. However, times have changed and new technologies and threats make the issue ripe for future research. Ms. Wood agreed that it is important for the SDR to weigh in on this issue whenever there is an opportunity to reiterate or amplify the message.

3. Grand Challenges

Priscilla Nelson (NSF) and Tim Cohn (USGS) led a discussion on the new SDR Grand Challenges concept. Dr. Nelson began by providing background information on the Grand Challenge concept, explaining that the idea was formed when she attended a meeting of the National Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) committee. She was inspired by the Grand Challenge concept they are implementing and noted the appropriateness of the concept for the SDR. Speaking from a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction,” she then briefed members on the specifics of the SDR Grand Challenge.

Members determined that the Grand Challenge requires a Task Force for organizational and functional purposes. Dr. Nelson argued for a cross-cut structure across the NSTC subcommittee structure noting that this is a chance for the SDR to step up, identify challenges and find the opportunities for information technology, social science, observing systems, etc. Ms. Wood agreed, reminding members that the SDR began with the idea that it is important to look at research and development investments and identify relevant groups. So far, the SDR has focused on collaboration, but it is now time to set the stage and show the way. Tim Cohn suggested that SDR members draft a strawman letter and provide a context for the Grand Challenge process. Gene Whitney requested the task force and attendance task groups be established with directed, fixed agendas, and that the functions be disbanded as soon as the work is complete.

Action: SDR members to establish an SDR Global Challenges Task Force to accomplish the following:

- Create a complete list of national priorities
- Complete a high level, outside-the-box list of topics
- Establish task groups to identify two or three Grand Challenges within each topic, as well as the big leaps in research required and the appropriate metrics to identify success.
- Define a list of targets: Where do we need to be?

Action: SDR members to invite briefs from other NSTC committees and subcommittees.

Action: SDR Secretariat to provide support for status reports and calls.

Action: The SDR Grand Challenge task force and task groups will meet to form both a plan and a process. The meeting will be held in the Stafford II building (NSF, 4201 Wilson Blvd, Arlington), Room 595 at 9 a.m. on May 16, 2003. If you are interested in participating, please R.S.V.P. to dori@grs-solutions.com so that we can arrange access to the building.

4. Update on the Fire Research Coordinating Council

Dr. Susan Conard (USFS) provided an update on the Fire Research Coordinating Council (FRCC) and highlighted opportunities for SDR collaboration with the FRCC. Speaking from PowerPoint slides, she listed the large number of agencies involved in fire research and proposed the establishment of new fire research working group within SDR, not just to build partnerships, but to define a plan for forward-looking fire research, especially as relates to users and decision support tools. SDR members agreed that the SDR is an excellent mechanism for coordinating

interagency fire research and agreed to support further exploration of establishing a working group for fire research coordination. Members of the current Fire Research Coordinating Council may end up joining this new working group.

Ms. Wood discussed the need to develop a vitality test for the establishment of new working groups. When considering a new working group, it is important to ask the following questions: How appropriate is the topic to be covered, especially with respect to the SDR and NSTC Charters? What type of energy will this require? What type of energy is available? There is a responsibility on the part of the SDR to review working groups regularly and to ensure that anyone meeting in the Subcommittee's name is truly meeting effectively.

Action: Susan Conard will propose a charter and set of goals for the Fire Research Coordination Working Group and will ensure copies are distributed prior to the next SDR meeting

Action: Gene Whitney will write an informational memorandum on the possibility of the new working group to OSTP Associate Director for Science Dr. Kathie Olsen.

5. Interim Report

Helen Wood provided a status update on the SDR Interim Report, announcing that the CENR clearance process is almost complete and, once clearances are final, the document will be sent to the Office of Management and Budget for final approval. Printing and CD creation require several weeks so the final document should be available in June.

6. Report from the International Working Group

Co-chair Fernando Echavarría (State Department) reported on the progress of the International White Paper and asked agencies who have not yet done so to submit contributions to the white paper. Dr. Echavarría also reminded members of the upcoming Special Meeting of the International Working Group, to be held May 20 at 1:30 p.m. in the Eisenhower Room of the White House Conference Center.

Action: The International Working Group has arranged a special meeting of federal agencies and DC-based international organizations such as the World Bank, the Organization of American States, and others. The meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Eisenhower Room of the White House Conference Center. If you are interested in participating, please R.S.V.P. to dori@grs-solutions.com.

Action: The authors of the International White Paper seek brief descriptions of each agency's international disaster reduction programs to construct a proper inventory/directory-type living document. If you have not yet submitted your agency's contribution to the International White Paper, please forward your information to dori@grs-solutions.com.

7. Report from the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group co-chair Steve Ambrose (NASA) reported on the activities of the working group, noting the status of the Synthetic Aperture Radar white paper, and the upcoming events for the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters.

Action: International Charter: Space and Major Disasters — Commercial Providers Briefing

NOAA and the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group will be hosting an informational briefing for commercial space imagery providers on the International

Charter: Space and Major Disasters. The briefing will be held on the final day of the Commercial Satellite Remote Sensing Symposium being sponsored by NOAA and USGS. The meeting will take place on the afternoon of Thursday, May 15, in the Polaris Room of the Ronald Reagan Building (1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW) in downtown Washington, DC from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. To attend, please R.S.V.P. to Peter Colohan at Peter.Colohan@noaa.gov.

**Action: International Charter: Space and Major Disasters —
Users Workshop**

NOAA and the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group will host a briefing and afternoon workshop on the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters. The workshop will focus on the international space assets available through the Charter for U.S. users. The event will take place at the U.S. Department of Commerce Herbert C. Hoover Building, Room 6057, on Tuesday, June 3, 2003 from 11:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided for a \$5 fee. To attend, please R.S.V.P. to Peter Colohan at Peter.Colohan@noaa.gov.

8. Additional Events - NEHRP Reauthorization Hearing

Dr. Priscilla Nelson invited SDR members to the next hearing on the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program. The hearing is this Thursday, May 8 at 2 p.m. in Room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

9. Agenda Items and Other Communications with the Subcommittee

Please send proposed agenda items and any other items intended for distribution to the full Subcommittee to Doris Akerman (dori@grs-solutions.com) by May 28, 2003.

10. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

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Secretariat

Doris Akerman, 703-560-7448, dori@grs-solutions.com

11. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month at 10am in the White House Conference Center. Upcoming meeting dates:

June 5, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
July 10, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
August 7, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
September 11, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
October 2, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
November 6, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
December 4, 2003	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
January 8, 2004	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
February 5, 2004	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room
March 4, 2004	10am – 12pm	Eisenhower Room

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.