

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

7 July 2005, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Eisenhower Room

Italics indicate absent members. "T" indicates members participating via teleconference.

Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair
David Applegate (USGS), Vice-Chair

NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

Working Group Chairs

International Working Group

Larry Roeder, Jr. (State), Co-Chair
Fernando Echavarría (State), Co-Chair
Dennis Wenger (NSF), Co-Chair

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Chair

Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Co-Chair
Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair

WindHRP Task Group

John Gaynor (NOAA), Chair

Drought Task Group

Pai-Yei Whung (NOAA), Chair

Designated Representatives

CDC Dan Sosin (T)
DHS *Bruce Davis*
DHS/FEMA *Mike Buckley*
DOD Earnest Paylor (T)
DOE *Alex de Alvarez*
DOI *Larry Braun*
DOI / USGS David Applegate
DOT *K. T. Thirumalai*
Sheila Rimal Duwadi
EOP / OSTP Gene Whitney

EPA Peter Jutro
HUD *John Kennedy*
NASA Steve Ambrose
NGA *Monica Gaughan*
NGB *Peter M. Aylward*
NIST *Jim St. Pierre*
Noel Raufaste
NOAA Helen Wood
Margaret Davidson
NSF Dennis Wenger

OPHS John Babb
Boris Lushniak
State *Fernando Echavarría & Larry Roeder, Jr.*
USACE *Michael O'Connor*
USAID *Peter Morris*
USDA *Allen Dedrick*
USDA / USFS *Susan Conard*
USGS David Applegate
John Filson (T)
Rosalind Helz

Other Attendees

NSF Bob O'Connor
Jacquelin Meszaro
NOAA Pai-Yei Whung

State Melba Crawford
Eric Noble
Secretariat Dori Akerman
Emily Wallace

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:03 Approval of June Meeting Minutes
10:05 Report from the Chair
10:15 Report from the NSTC Liaison
10:25 Working Group Reports and Requests
11:15 Discussion of Near Term Opportunities
for Earth Observations
11:40 Briefing on the U.S. Tsunami Plan
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- June Meeting Minutes
- Grand Challenges document, CD and Outreach Plan
- SDR Outcomes and Calendar
- SDR Membership List
- Drought Working Group Strategic Implementation Plan Template
- Windstorm Impact Reduction Implementation Plan
- Remote Sensing Applications Working Group Meeting Minutes
- Draft Agenda for National Academies July 19 Workshop on Citizen Information Needs in Responding to Disaster
- UN /ISDR Vulnerability and Early Warning in Disaster Reduction Information about Calendar Sponsorship in 2006
- Near Earth Objects Background Material

I. Call to Order

SDR Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes and Review of Actions

Members approved the June meeting minutes. All actions from the June meeting are complete except for the tsunami lessons learned-related op-ed. The op-ed was authored but was never placed due to internal NOAA considerations. Dr. Gene Whitney concurred with Ms. Wood that the piece could be saved for a more timely release later this year.

III. Summary of Discussion

A. Report from the Chair

The Grand Challenges document is in print! Members may request that hard copies and/or CDs be sent to them for distribution within their agencies by responding to a forthcoming e-mail from the SDR Secretariat.

Helen Wood briefed Dr. Kathie Olsen on the Grand Challenges document and 4-page strategic implementation plan follow-on documents two weeks ago. Dr. Olsen was also brought up to speed on the U.S. tsunami plan, the activities of the WindHRP Working Group, the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group and other SDR activities. Dr. Olsen was very enthusiastic about SDR's activities and had many kudos for the Grand Challenges document. She advised Ms. Wood that the 4-page strategic implementation plan follow-on documents should have more of an interagency focus.

The updated SDR membership list is available. Members are invited to make changes and update information, as appropriate, for their agencies. In addition, members are advised that membership vetting will take place in the fall.

The SDR Outcomes and Accomplishments document has also been updated and is available to members.

Ms. Wood thanked those SDR Members who were able to attend the Disasters Roundtable on tsunami and the National Academies Workshop on Information Technology Needs in Crisis. She pointed out an upcoming workshop (July 19) that will focus on citizen information needs in times of crisis. Gordon Bell is a private donor who is funding this particular workshop through the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board of the National Academies. At the end of the workshop, participants will help determine if an Academies study on the subject is warranted.

B. Report from the NSTC Liaison

Dr. Gene Whitney reported that he and Ms. Wood would be briefing the Senate Subcommittee on Disaster Prediction and Prevention that afternoon at 1:30 p.m., at their request.

Dr. Whitney also informed members that the Task Force for Effective Warnings held its first meeting in June. The Department of Homeland Security and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are co-chairing the effort. There are many political challenges in this endeavor, not just technical issues to be solved. Ms. Wood clarified that the Task Force on Effective Warnings has not been convened under SDR. Instead, it is affiliated with SDR with Ms. Wood serving as an ex-officio member. The Task Force is under NSTC CENR and Committee on Homeland Security. SDR is providing support for the effort.

C. Grand Challenges Working Group Report

Dr. Noel Raufaste announced that RADM John Babb would serve as the new co-chair for the Grand Challenges Working Group. The template for the follow-on documents has been developed by the Drought Working Group and is available for members to review. The hazard teams used in developing the Grand Challenges will again be used for the follow-on documents. Dr. Raufaste would like to meet with the 8 hazard team leaders in the near future to discuss these documents. He will coordinate with Dr. Whitney, Ms. Wood and the Secretariat to identify potential dates for that meeting.

Ms. Wood added that a one day offsite workshop may be in order. In the ensuing discussion of such a retreat, Ms. Wood noted that additional financial resources should be identified to make that event a success and to continue funding the Secretariat. She said that each member should expect to receive an invitation to the upcoming workshop as well as information about how to support the effort.

D. Drought Working Group Report

Dr. Whung reported that the Drought Working Group is building final consensus about the drought 4-page follow-on document and they expect to complete the document on or before July 12. Dr. Helz inquired about the integration of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) into the strategic implementation plan. Dr. Whung explained that NIDIS is currently a big focus of the document and the document is still in draft form.

E. Wind Hazard Reduction Program Working Group Report

In Mr. Gaynor's absence, Dr. Wenger briefed the Subcommittee about the progress of the Wind Hazard Reduction Program Working Group. He said that approximately half of the document has been written and in their meeting on July 20 at 3:00 p.m. they expect to tackle Section 5, the section that speaks to where wind hazard reduction efforts in this country should be. Dr. Wenger also reported that they expect to extract a 4-pager follow-on document from this report to accompany the Grand Challenges follow-on documents.

F. Earth Observation Task Group Report

Dr. Helz reported that she will be retiring in September and advised that this may be the appropriate time to end the task group.

G. Remote Sensing Applications Working Group Report

For their first meeting in June, Mr. Ambrose reported that the topics were the international charter and Near Earth Objects. Meeting minutes were distributed as were briefing materials on Near Earth Objects. The next meeting will be on July 21. A meeting time and location will be announced.

H. International Working Group Report

Meeting minutes from the June meeting will be made available. The International Working Group is trying to come to grips with ISDR, Dr. Wenger reported. The United Nations is letting each country develop its own platform. In some countries a Blue Ribbon panel has been formed which leads to fantastic brain power but no political connectivity. In other countries the platform is simply a folder on someone's desk. There is a clear distinction between between the International Working Group and the national platform. By July 29 (the date of the next International Working Group meeting), members should have ideas clearly formed about how the national platform should be formulated. The Blue Ribbon panel is a good idea, but only if government representatives are included so as to have political connectivity. They may take nominations from SDR members this fall about who should be included on such a panel.

Keeping with the international discussion, Ms. Wood distributed a flyer from the UN/ISDR about an opportunity to sponsor the 2006 Vulnerability and Early Warning in Disaster Reduction Calendar.

I. Tsunami Lessons Learned Working Group Report

At the June Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction Meeting Dr. Whitney announced that Dr. Kathie Olsen was so pleased with the Tsunami Lessons Learned Interim Report it should be re-worked in to an op-ed piece for the Washington Post. Due to poor timing and lack of buy-in on the agency level about placing the op-ed, it has not yet been placed. Dr. Whitney agreed with Ms. Wood that it could certainly be held for more timely placement in the future. That should not be an action item at this time.

A final lessons learned document will be authored this fall and it should focus on the science and technology lessons that are still being learned following the Indian Ocean tsunami. Dr. Raufaste suggested we consider a section within that report detailing improved design and construction practices. Ms. Wood concurred and elaborated that the topic of improved design and construction practices is a good cross-cutting issue and may be worthy of a 4-pager.

J. Briefing on the U.S. Tsunami Plan

Drs. Jones and Devine announced to the Subcommittee that the penultimate draft of the U.S. Tsunami Plan would be available to the leadership/core writing team before the close of business that day. A conference call for the following day was scheduled to review final changes before the NSTC clearance process begins the following week. Dr. Devine emphasized that they really benefited from the Grand Challenges document because it gave them a playbook and framework from which to author this plan. Ms. Wood underscored how important it is that all SDR documents be consistent with the elements of disaster reduction.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m. ET.

V. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET in the Eisenhower Room of the White House Conference Center:

August 4, 2005
September 8, 2005
October 6, 2005
November 3, 2005
December 1, 2005

VI. 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 Dori Akerman (dori@grs-solutions.com).

VII. Contact Information SDR Leadership

Helen Wood, Chair, 301-713-1140, helen.wood@noaa.gov
David Applegate, Vice-Chair, 703-648-6715, applegate@usgs.gov

International Working Group

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 Dennis Wenger, Co-Chair, 703-292-7014, dwenger@nsf.gov

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz, Chair, 703-648-6086, rhelz@usgs.gov

Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair, 301-975-6062, noel.raufaste@nist.gov

Drought Task Group

Pai-Yei Whung, Chair, 301-713-0460 x204, pai-yei.whung@noaa.gov

WindHRP Task Group

John Gaynor, Chair, 301-713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov

Secretariat

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

VIII. Summary of Actions

July MEETING ACTIONS

Action	Lead	By When
Distribute all meeting handouts to SDR Members	Secretariat	Complete
Submit Grand Challenges to CENR Secretariat for distribution to CENR members	Secretariat	15 July
Secretariat will submit Grand Challenges to the NSTC Secretariat for posting to the NSTC website	Secretariat	15 July
Identify 3 possible dates for Grand Challenges offsite workshop this fall	Secretariat	15 July
Arrange a location for the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group meeting on 21 July (WHCC is their first choice)	Secretariat	12 July
Distribute USGEO Member List to all SDR Members	Secretariat	15 July
Arrange a joint meeting of the SDR and USGEO leadership	Secretariat	15 July
Ensure that appropriate SDR participants are included in the USGEO working group lists	Secretariat	
Arrange a teleconference call with Dr. Applegate, Dr. Helz, Ms. Wood and Dr. Whitney to discuss future of the Earth Observation Task Group and USGEO/SDR relations	Secretariat	

