

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

6 October 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

Fernando Echavarría (State), Co-Chair
Dennis Wenger (NSF), Co-Chair

Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste (NIST)

Earth Observation Working Group

Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Chair (T)
Jay Feuquay (USGS), Co-Chair

WindHRP Task Group

John Gaynor (NOAA), Chair

Drought Task Group

Pai-Yei Whung (USDA), Co-Chair
Jay Lawrimore (NOAA), Co-Chair

Designated Representatives

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

HUD *John Kennedy*
NASA Steve Ambrose
NGA *Monica Gaughan*
Peter Rinkleff
NGB *Peter M. Aylward*
Stephen Davis
NIST *Jim St. Pierre*
Noel Raufaste
NOAA *Helen Wood*
Margaret Davidson (T)

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

Other Attendees

DOI / USGS Jim Devine
EPA Steve Clark
NASA Shahid Habib
NSF Jacqueline Meszaros
Bob O'Connor

NOAA John Gaynor
Michael Hales
Doug Harper
Barbara Lancaster
Mararet McCalla
Nathalie Valette-Silver (T)

State / NGA Melba Crawford
Secretariat Dori Akerman
Emily Wallace
Disasters Roundtable
Bill Hooke

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Approval of September Meeting Minutes
10:10 Report from the Vice-Chair
10:20 Report from the NSTC Liaison
10:30 The Next Big Disaster
11:20 Working Group Reports and Requests
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- September Meeting Minutes
- Background on 24-hour Waiver for Disaster Management
- Disasters Roundtable Workshop Announcement
- Lessons from Katrina and Rita by Victoria Transport Policy Institute
- Next Big Disaster: Earthquake
- Next Big Disaster: Volcano
- Next Big Disaster: Hurricane
- Natural Hazards Observer Article on the Grand Challenges

I. Call to Order

SDR Vice-Chair David Applegate called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes and Review of Actions

Members approved the September meeting minutes. All actions from the September meeting are complete.

III. Summary of Discussion

A. Report from the Vice-Chair

Dr. David Applegate reported that a draft charter has been prepared for the new Earth Observations Working Group, which will assume many of the responsibilities formerly held by the Earth Observations Task Group and the Remote Sensing Applications Working Group. All members of the previous two groups will be involved, and agencies who did not participate in the previous groups are welcome to send representatives as well.

Dr. Applegate invited Michael Hales from NOAA's Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing (ACCRES) to discuss the proposed 24-hour waiver for commercial high resolution satellite imagery. Normally, there is a 24-hour waiting period before high resolution satellite imagery is made available to non-federal government entities. The waiver would eliminate this waiting period and make imagery available to state and local governments, non-government organizations and international governments in the event of major disasters. ACCRES has asked SDR to provide recommendations about how to proceed with the waiver.

The next Disasters Roundtable, "Law, Science and Disaster," will be held on October 18th. The agenda was included in the meeting packets.

Dr. Applegate pointed out a publication from the Canadian Government that was submitted by the Department of Transportation and included in the meeting packets.

Meeting participants also were advised of a new bill, S. 1753, the Warning, Alert and Response Network Act, that was introduced last month in the Senate. The bill calls for a program office to be established within NOAA to develop a national warning network.

B. Report from the NSTC Liaison

Dr. Gene Whitney began by stating the Office of Science and Technology Policy would be tracking S. 1753. The Task Force on Effective Warnings has been dormant because a policy piece must be put into place. The main responsibility of the task force is to coordinate disaster warnings systems on all levels. Dr. Whitney stressed that the Task Force will not take away any agency's programs or projects, but is simply seeking to get everyone on the same page. The Science and Technology Policy Institute will soon make a recommendation as to how the Task Force on Effective Warnings should proceed based on the available technology and current policies. Once reconvened, a key piece of the Task Force work will be analyzing the social/behavioral aspects of warnings, namely how to motivate people to react.

Dr. Whitney also stated that he is putting together a list of comments from members on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but at this time the SDR has not been asked to compile a lessons learned document, as similar efforts are already underway with Frances Townsend assembling a report for the White House. State and local governments have been providing input for that report but there have been difficulties receiving the appropriate information from Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida and

North Carolina. Dr. Melba Crawford volunteered to get the appropriate information from Texas and Mr. Bruce Davis volunteered to get information from Mississippi.

Dr. Margaret Davidson asked if the rebuilding plans for Louisiana and Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina would make the states and localities more disaster resilient. Dr. Whitney said that FEMA dollars can help restore buildings and critical infrastructure to their previous state but cannot be used to improve the structures or facilities. There are simply no funds available for hardening communication or electrical systems. The locals are making all the decisions about how federal dollars are spent and most are not soliciting federal advice.

IV. The Next Big Disaster

In September Dr. Whitney asked the SDR to write scenarios about U.S. vulnerability to other disasters scenarios. Meeting packets include hurricane, earthquake and volcano scenarios. Tsunami and flood scenarios are still being written. These scenarios will be used to brief Dr. Marburger but will not be cleared documents. They are for internal SDR use only. Members may send comments about the hurricane, earthquake and volcano scenarios to the Secretariat by Friday, October 14.

Dr. Bill Hooke, Chair of the Disasters Roundtable, spoke to the SDR about Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Next Big Disaster scenarios. Hurricane Katrina was not the worst-case scenario for New Orleans or the country as a whole. Refineries could have been more damaged and the levees could have failed to a greater degree giving way to even more flooding and loss of life. The press is narrowly discussing warning and evacuation and very little about recovery. Discussions about preparedness are absent entirely. Evacuation and emergency response must be improved. More than anything, though, home (or school or hospitals) must be safer places to be during a hazard. That means that law enforcement must be present to prevent criminal activity and water and sewer systems should either be hardened or come back on-line more quickly. This will not be achieved overnight.

In the interim, the SDR can promote a “No Adverse Effects” policy. Meaning the country or a state or community can weather a hazard and still have homes and jobs after the event has passed. A hazard event should not mean the end to a way of life. Dr. Hooke pointed out that tiny compromises over time led to chaos in the face of disaster during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. All policies prior to Hurricane Katrina favored a short-term approach.

SDR also must continue fostering a culture of responsibility and talking about disaster reduction in a way that people will listen.

The American Meteorological Society will host a forum on Hurricane Katrina on December 19 – 21. The key questions are:

1. Experts saw Katrina coming. Why did bad things happen?
2. What other big disasters are on the horizon? How can we effectively mitigate against them?
3. Discuss the 200 hours prior to the hurricane and the 200 hours following the hurricane from a warnings, jurisdictions, communications and information standpoint.
4. What assets can industry bring to bear for disaster reduction? Should they have a seat at the table?

V. Working Group Reports

Grand Challenges Task Group. The Grand Challenges article for the November Hazards Observer is included in the Meeting Packet. The 9 September Grand Challenges meeting led to consensus about the topics for the Grand Challenges four-page follow-on documents. They are:

Topic	Co-Chairs	By When
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Topic	Co-Chairs	By When
Drought	Pei-Yei Whung (USDA), (301) 504-4868, pai-yei.whung@nps.ars.usda.gov Jay Lawrimore (NOAA), (828) 271-4750, jay.lawrimore@noaa.gov	October 31
Coastal Inundation	Margaret Davidson (NOAA), (843) 740-1220, margaret.davidson@noaa.gov	October 31
Tsunami	Jim Devine (USGS), (703) 648-4423, jdevine@usgs.gov	October 31
Wind Storm	John Gaynor (NOAA), (301) 713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov	November 30
Hurricane	John Gaynor (NOAA), (301) 713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov	November 30
Tornado and Severe Weather	John Gaynor (NOAA), (301) 713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov	November 30
Winter Storms and Heat Waves	John Gaynor (NOAA), (301) 713-0460 x117, john.gaynor@noaa.gov	November 30
Wildland Fire	Susan Conard (USFS), (703) 605-5255, sconard@fs.fed.us Ruddy Mell (NIST), (301) 975-4797, william.mell@nist.gov	November 30
Earthquake	Dave Applegate (USGS), (703) 648-6714, applegate@usgs.gov Designee (NIST)	December 16
Flood	Dennis Wenger (NSF), (703) 292-7014, dwenger@nsf.gov Andy Bruzewicz (USACE), (603) 646 4372, Andrew.J.Bruzewicz@erdc.usace.army.mil	December 16
Human and Ecosystem Health Hazards	Nathalie Vallette-Silver (NOAA), (301) 713-3020 x181, nathalie.valette-silver@noaa.gov Josephine Malilay (CDC), jmalilay@cdc.gov	December 16
Industrial Accident (including urban fire)	Regan Murray (EPA), (513) 569-7031, murray.regan@epa.gov Designee	December 16
Landslides and Debris Flow	Peter Lyttle (USGS), (703) 648-6943, plyttle@usgs.gov Bob Adler (NASA), (301) 614-6290, Robert.f.adler@nasa.gov	December 16
Volcano	Jim Quick (USGS), (703) 648-6711, jquick@usgs.gov	December 16
Earth Observation and Remote Sensing	Margaret Davidson (NOAA), (843) 740-1220, margaret.davidson@noaa.gov Melba Crawford (State), (202) 663-0032, CrawfordM@state.gov Shahid Habib and/or Steve Ambrose (NASA)	2006
Ecological	Nathalie Vallette-Silver (NOAA), (301) 713-3020 x181, nathalie.valette-silver@noaa.gov Josephine Malilay (CDC), jmalilay@cdc.gov John Babb (DHHS), (240) 453-6101, jbabb@osophs.dhhs.gov	2006

Topic	Co-Chairs	By When
Public Health	Nathalie Vallette-Silver (NOAA), (301) 713-3020 x181, nathalie.valette-silver@noaa.gov Josephine Malilay (CDC), jmalilay@cdc.gov John Babb (DHHS), (240) 453-6101, jbabb@osophs.dhhs.gov	2006
Warnings	Gene Whitney (OSTP), (202) 456-6081, gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov	2006
Social and Economic Impact of Hazards	Dennis Wenger (NSF), (703) 292-7014, dwenger@nsf.gov	2006
International	Fernando Echavaria (State), (202) 663-2395, echavarriafr@state.gov Dennis Wenger (NSF), (703) 292-7014, dwenger@nsf.gov Designee (USAID)	2006

The Grand Challenges Offsite will be held on 28 October in the Truman Room at the White House Conference Center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. RSVPs should be sent to the Secretariat no later than 5:00 p.m. on 25 October.

Drought Working Group. The Drought Working Group did not meet in September.

WindHRP Working Group. The Windstorm Impact Reduction Implementation Plan will go forward for clearance on 12 October.

Earth Observation Working Group. The Earth Observation Working Group will meet on 20 October at 10:00 a.m. in Room 5215 in the Department of Commerce (located on the corner of 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW).

International Working Group. The International Working Group did not meet in September.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. EDT.

VII. 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:

November 3, 2005	April 6, 2006	September 14, 2006
December 1, 2005	May 4, 2006	October 5, 2006
January 12, 2006	June 8, 2006	November 2, 2006
February 2, 2006	July 13, 2006	December 7, 2006
March 2, 2006	August 3, 2006	

VIII. 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).

IX. 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

Fernando Echavarría, Co-Chair, 202-663-2395, echavarríafr@state.gov
 Dennis Wenger, Co-Chair, 703-292-7014, dwenger@nsf.gov

Earth Observation Working Group

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-1513, sambrose@nasa.gov
 Margaret Davidson, Chair, 843-740-1220, Margaret.davidson@noaa.gov
 Jay Feuquay, Co-Chair, 703-648-5057, feuquay@usgs.gov

Grand Challenges Task Group

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

Drought Task Group

Pai-Yei Whung, Co-Chair, (301) 504-4868, pai-yei.whung@nps.ars.usda.gov
 Jay Lawrimore, Co-Chair, 828-271-4750, jay.lawrimore@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

X. Summary of Actions

OCTOBER MEETING ACTIONS

Action	Lead	By When
Members will submit information on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on all current science and technology initiatives as well as individual agency efforts/accomplishments with regard to Hurricane Katrina to Gene Whitney (gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov , 202-456-6081)	SDR Members	As soon as possible and ongoing
Circulate Task Force on Effective Warnings Membership List	Secretariat	Complete
Members interested in participating in the Earth Observation Working Group will contact the Secretariat (dori@grs-solutions.com)	SDR Members	Complete
Provide comments on The Next Big Disasters scenarios to Secretariat (dori@grs-	SDR Members	Complete

solutions.com)		
RSVP for Grand Challenges Offsite by e-mailing the Secretariat (dori@grs-solutions.com)	SDR Members	Complete
Secure local and state emergency response plans and e-mail to Secretariat (dori@grs-solutions.com)	SDR Members	3 November