

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

07 June 2007, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., New Executive Office Building Room 5213

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

## Officers

David Applegate (USGS), Chair  
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Vice-Chair

## NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

## Working Group Chairs

**International Working Group**  
Ralph Braibanti (State), Chair

## Infrastructure Task Group

Joy Pauschke (NSF), Chair

## Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair  
Tim Battista (NOAA), Co-Chair  
Bruce Quirk (USGS), Co-Chair

## Resource Impacts Task Group

Susan Conard (USFS), Chair

## Designated Representatives

**BLM** Ronald Huntsinger  
**CDC** Mark Keim (T)  
**DHS** Bruce Davis  
**DHS/FEMA** David Maurstad  
**DHS/USCG** Suzanne Strohl (T)  
**DOD** Al Johnson  
**DOE** Patricia Hoffman  
**DOT** Sheila Duwadi  
**EOP / OSTP** Gene Whitney

**EPA** Peter Jutro  
**HUD** David Engel  
**NASA** Steve Ambrose  
**NGB** Daniel Bochicchio  
**NIH** Allen Dearry  
**NIST** Jack Hayes  
Noel Raufaste  
**NOAA** Margaret Davidson  
**NSF** Joy Pauschke

**OPHS** Sven Rodenbeck  
**State** Ralph Braibanti  
Fernando Echavarria  
**USACE** Barbara J. Sotirin  
**USAID** Peter Morris  
**USDA / USFS** Susan Conard  
**USGS** David Applegate  
Paula Gori

## Other Attendees

**EPA** Greg Susanke  
**NASA** Shahid Habib  
Elizabeth Williams  
**NOAA** John Gaynor  
Nell Codner  
Nathalie Valette-Silver (T)  
Margaret McCalla  
Eddie Bernard

**NSF** Bob O'Connor  
**NRC** Mike Goodchild  
**Secretariat** Allison Kilcourse  
Emily Wallace  
**State** Jordan Muller  
**USACE** Dimitra Syriopoulou

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions  
10:03 Approval of Meeting Minutes  
10:05 Report from the Chair  
10:20 Report from the NSTC Liaison  
10:30 Other Reports  
10:35 Presentation-Improving Geospatial Support for Disaster Management  
11:10 Presentation-National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program  
11:45 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- Agenda
- May Meeting Minutes
- Tsunami Planning Report
- Successful Response Starts with a Map Report in Brief

## **I. Call to Order**

Subcommittee on Disaster Relief (SDR) Chair David Applegate called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

## **II. Summary of Discussion**

### **A. Report from the Chair**

Dr. David Applegate (USGS) began by thanking the members for their contributions for the services and expertise of the SDR secretariat; NOAA was identified as contributing additional support. Other agencies wanting to contribute should contact Dr. Applegate for more information. He then reminded the members of last month's presentation by Mary Glackin on climate change and asked how SDR should link into the large number of government activities concerning the topic. He suggested that rather than a creating a working group, SDR should create a liaison group to the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP). A liaison group would provide SDR for commenting on CCSP documents and a window into the state of the science needed to create a climate change agenda. They could also provide input for World Climate Research Program (WCRP)/Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) documents. As Dr. Whitney stated that since CCSP already has the necessary science, it makes sense to take advantage of their knowledge rather than start over again from the beginning with a new working group. He also emphasized that it is SDR's responsibility to make sure that natural hazards and disasters are appropriately attributed; the hazards community and the public cannot jump to the conclusion that climate change is the cause. The Federal government in general, and SDR in particular need to communicate to agencies what we know *and* what we don't know (scientific reality). Dr. Bruce Davis (DHS) added that it would give SDR a chance to influence CCSP's work. Dr. Shahid Habib (NASA) suggested that SDR create a charter for a liaison group and then choose the best possible members from there; he offered to begin drafting the language. Nathalie Valette-Silver (NOAA) also offered her help in the project.

Dr. Applegate reminded the members that the Resource Impacts Working Group has its next meeting June 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm at the Forest Service Building.

### **B. Report from the NSTC Liaison**

Dr. Whitney began by reminding the members of the security measures that must be taken each month to clear each person and allow them to enter the building. He emphasized that each month members must provide the necessary information to access the building. He also stressed the importance of punctuality.

He continued by discussing the Grand Challenges Implementation Plan clearance from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Six OMB examiners have commented on the documents and he is awaiting feedback from one more; hopefully then it will clear. Although the matrices will not be published, he stressed that they can still be of use to individual agencies.

## **III. Other Reports**

### **IGOS Report Input**

Members will be receiving the Integrated Global Observing Strategy (IGOS) report for review and comments. Comments should be submitted directly to Steve Ambrose ([sambrose@nasa.gov](mailto:sambrose@nasa.gov)) by Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **IV. Presentations**

##### **A. National Research Council report “Successful Response Starts with a Map: Improving Geospatial Support for Disaster Management”- Dr. Mike Goodchild**

Dr. Goodchild’s (NRC) presentation emphasized that geospatial information is central in all aspects of emergency management; for example, actual paper maps are essential for search and rescue missions. People in the field must have access to geospatial information within the first few minutes to take advantage of the “golden hour” and save lives. There needs to be standing geospatial contracts in place so that when disaster strikes, geospatial information can be captured immediately. Advanced technology also needs to be adapted to be more useful in the field.

Dr. Applegate asked if it was possible to quantify the benefits of geospatial images in an emergency situation. Dr. Goodchild responded that it was very difficult to do.

Fernando Echavarria (State) asked how you could educate policymakers to the importance of this subject. Dr. Goodchild responded that it is possible to change the way people think; he noted policymakers’ interest in Google Earth as an example. Bruce Davis commented that DHS is making improvements in acquiring imagery.

Dr. Whitney questioned the difference between foundation data and post-event data. He also stated that this report was a prime example of a science and technology need for response and asked what SDR could do. Dr. Goodchild responded that they could invest in education and research. They can also request that people volunteer information; information does not always have to “come from above”. Jordan Muller (State) commented on the usefulness of research designed to provide first responders with a way to send information back to agencies. Dr. Goodchild noted the prospect of technology that would allow first responders to carry sensors in order to quickly relay field information to others.

Dr. Mark Keim (CDC) informed the members of developments in his research regarding public health vulnerability mapping. The maps relate to human vulnerability (e.g., disabilities, ethnicity, gender, age) combined with infrastructure. They would help to identify and track public health vulnerabilities in emergency situations. There is a pilot program in Florida that creates risk-based maps block by block (over 65, under poverty level, non-English speaking) in a neighborhood watch type effort. There is a September 30<sup>th</sup> roll-out. He suggested that they schedule a briefing in the fall.

Nathalie Valette-Silver requested hard copies of the NRC report.

##### **B. National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program- Dr. Eddie Bernard**

Dr. Bernard’s (NOAA) presentation focused on the newly released tsunami research agenda and suggested new ways of detection and disaster prevention. He asked if the SDR could create a mechanism for the research agencies to coordinate their research. He questioned whether more agencies should be included, specifically the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); he wants to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Dr. Whitney responded that the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP) had been designated as the coordinating body and that it might be wise to schedule a meeting with all of the involved agencies at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to draft a coherent interagency plan. He also suggested meeting with the OMB. The SDR may consider comparing and contrasting tsunami detection coordination efforts of the NTHMP, the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), and the Wind Hazards Reduction Program (WindHRP).

Dr. Shahid Habib asked if satellites would be helpful in tsunami detection. Dr. Bernard responded that the imagery for Sumatra was leaps ahead; altimeter data justified the models two weeks later. This type of satellite imaging is useful from a validation standpoint but only for research, not response. Plus, this was the only tsunami ever big enough for the altimeter to see.

**V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

**VI. 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 New Executive Office Building (contact the Secretariat to facilitate building entry):

July 19, 2007	October 4, 2007	December 6, 2007
September 6, 2007	November 1, 2007	

**VII. 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 Emily Wallace (ewallace@grs-solutions.com).

**VIII. Contact Information SDR Leadership**

David Applegate, Chair, 703-648-6715, applegate@usgs.gov  
 Margaret Davidson, Vice Chair, 843-740-1220, margaret.davidson@noaa.gov  
 Gene Whitney, NSTC Liaison, 202-456-6081, gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov

**International Working Group**

Ralph Braibanti, Chair, 202-663-2330, braibantirl@state.gov

**Earth Observations Working Group**

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-0851, sambrose@nasa.gov  
 Tim Battista, Co-Chair, 301-713-3028 x171, tim.battista@noaa.gov  
 Bruce Quirk, Co-Chair, 605-594-6040, quirk@usgs.gov

**Secretariat**

Emily Wallace, 703-560-7448, ewallace@grs-solutions.com

**IV. Summary of June Actions**

Action	Lead	By When
Notify Dr. Applegate if your agency wants to contribute to the SDR secretariat	SDR Members	ongoing
Draft a charter or terms of reference for a climate change liaison group	Dr. Shahid Habib with Nathalie Valette-Silver	June 15
Review and submit any comments on IGOS report to Stephen Ambrose (sambrose@hq.nasa.gov)	SDR Members	June 20
Schedule Dr. Mark Keim to present at an SDR meeting this fall	Secretariat	July 18