

# Discussion Draft

## Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

3 December 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Department of Commerce, Room 1414

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

### Officers

David Applegate (USGS), Chair  
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Vice-Chair  
*Dennis Wenger (NSF), Vice-Chair*

### NSTC Liaison

TBD

### Designated Representatives

**BLM** *Edwin Roberson*

*Ronald Huntsinger*

**CDC** Mark Keim

**DHS** Bruce Davis

**DHS/FEMA** Deborah Ingram

**DHS/USCG** *Steven Cohen*

**DOD** *Al Johnson*

**DOE** *Patricia Hoffman*

**DOT** *Kelly Leone*

Sheila Duwadi

*Tim Schmidt*

**EOP/OSTP** TBD

**EDA** *Audrey Clarke*

**EPA** *Peter Jutro*

*Stephen Clark*

**FERC** Howard Wheeler (T)

**HUD** *David Engel*

**NASA** Andrea Donnellan

**NGA** *Stephen Homeyer*

**NGB** *Daniel Bochicchio*

**NIH** Allen Dearry (T)

**NIST** William Grosshandler

*Jack Hayes*

**NOAA** John Gaynor

**NSF** *Dennis Wenger*

**OPHS** Sven Rodenbeck (T)

**State** *Cari Enav*

*Fernando Echavarria*

**USACE** *Barbara J. Sotirin*

*Dimitra Syriopoulou*

**USAID** *Sezin Tokar*

**USDA** TBD

**USFS** *Carlos Rodriguez-*

*Franco*

**USGS** David Applegate

Paula Gori (T)

### Other Attendees

**DOT** Curtis Tompkins

**EPA** Alona Bachi

Marcy Rockman

**NASA** Michael Goodman

**NGA** Dana Miller

Whitney Nelson

**NIST** Long Phan

**NOAA** Nell Codner

Maria Honeycutt

**NSF** Jacqueline Meszaros

**State** Nora Parsons

**USAID** Wayne Pennington

**Secretariat** Ross Faith

Emily Wallace

### Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions

10:05 Presentation: JSOST/ORRAP Workshop on  
Coastal Inundation and Sea Level Rise

11:00 Report from the Vice-Chairs

11:15 Update on the Climate Change Adaptation  
White Paper

11:30 Approval of October and November Meeting  
Minutes

11:35 Report from the Chair

11:55 Close and Next Actions

### Handouts

- Agenda
- October and November Meeting Minutes
- Draft Climate Change Adaptation-Disaster Risk Reduction White Paper
- NASA Earth Observing Missions Applications Workshop Announcement
- 2010 Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Announcement

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## I. Call to Order and Introductions

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Chair David Applegate (USGS) called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and the participants introduced themselves.

## II. Presentation: JSOST/ORRAP Workshop on Coastal Inundation and Sea Level Rise

SDR Vice-Chair Margaret Davidson (NOAA) introduced Dr. Jerry Schubel, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific and former Chair of the Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) to the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST). Prior to these roles, Schubel was President and CEO of the New England Aquarium from 1994 to 2001, and Dean and Director of the Marine Sciences Research Center of the State University of New York at Stony Brook from 1974 to 1994.

At the Aquarium of the Pacific, Schubel directs the Marine Conservation Research Institute and the Aquatic Forum, which brings together scientists, policy-makers and stakeholders to explore alternative ways of dealing with some of California's important, complex, and often controversial environmental issues. Dr. Schubel holds a Ph.D. in oceanography from The Johns Hopkins University, has written extensively for scientific journals and general audiences, and has been active in regional, national and international environmental affairs, particularly concerning the coastal ocean. He has chaired the National Sea Grant Review Panel, the National Research Council's Marine Board, and has served on numerous NRC committees. He also is a former member of EPA's Science Advisory Board and, in addition to his duties at the Aquarium of the Pacific, is a current member of the Science Advisory Panel for California's Ocean Protection Council.

In his presentation to the SDR, Schubel gave a preview of the JSOST/ORRAP Workshop on Coastal Inundation and Sea Level Rise, scheduled to be held at the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, VA, December 3-5, 2009. Schubel stated that the goal of the workshop was to frame the expected impacts of inundation and sea level rise with respect to different spatial and temporal scales. The framework developed will focus on how relevant data, information, and products can be developed, integrated, and effectively delivered to make communities disaster resilient. Elements of the envisioned framework include:

- Roles and responsibilities;
- Prioritized tasks;
- Descriptions of geospatial frameworks, modeling, and decision-support tools; and
- A validated list of required data, information and tools and products.

Workshop participants also are expected to: 1) develop a preliminary "needs assessment" from existing regional and sector-specific inventories; and 2) produce a declaration seeking commitment from federal, state and local agencies, academic institutions, non-profits, and other community organizations to implement the workshop framework and associated plans. Properly framed and implemented, the resilience plans will ensure a nation that is well prepared to deal with the hazards posed by a changing climate. Schubel stressed that the workshop outcomes would be most helpful if written in a manner comprehensible not just to scientists, but to the broader spectrum of decision makers.

Broadening the scope of his presentation, Schubel categorized the quest for resilience in a changing climate as a "wicked problem" – a conundrum which cannot be solved, per se, but managed. Wicked problems are often stunningly complex, laced with uncertainty at every turn, and spillover into several disciplines across the sciences and humanities. In such cases, the first requirement is to frame the problem correctly, and this is the principal goal of the workshop. As a proxy for a

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solution, Schubel endorsed a course of action for climate change adaptation which minimizes regret. Specifically, strategies should be combined and applied in a way that most effectively minimizes the social, economic, and environmental impacts on communities, regions, and the nation. The workshop framework will essentially chart out the data, information, and tools needed to support of these strategies and identify the actors who should be responsible for them. Schubel expected that workshop participants would flesh out the following framework skeleton.

## **Draft Workshop Framework**

Define the Problem and State It Richly

- Develop a Shared Community Vision
- Identify Geographic Scope and Time Scales
- Recruit Partners and Clarify Roles

Gather the Data, Information and Tools

- Characterize SLR and Inundation for Project Area...Present and Future
- Identify Critical Data, Information, and Tools
- Secure or Develop the Necessary Data, Information, and Tools

Identify and Explore Alternative Solutions

- Identify and Evaluate Strategies

Build and Sustain Capacity and Support

- Build Institutional Capacity and Political Will
- Develop Communication Strategy
- Institutionalize Program

Davidson stated that in order to tackle the problem, federal agencies need to coordinate more effectively. She noted the current proliferation of boutique efforts and pointed out that the products of these efforts were often not interoperable. The goal of the workshop would be to develop a common framework for federal agency efforts.

Mark Keim (CDC) cited starvation events in Micronesia and deteriorating health conditions in the U.S. Territories of the Marshall and South Pacific Islands as problematic but instructive examples of the upcoming challenges posed by sea level rise and inundation.

Schubel said that the conversation around sea level rise and inundation needed to be expanded to include human and ecosystem health issues, which often fly under the radar.

## **III. Report from the Vice-Chairs**

Davidson reported that the White House Long-Term Disaster Recovery Working Group (<http://www.disasterrecoveryworkinggroup.gov/>) led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is moving rapidly to generate recommendations for the President. One of the focus areas is Resilience and Sustainability, and the DHS/HUD team working this issue is scheduled to meet next week with other federal agencies to solicit input on an initial draft document.

Davidson also reported that the work of the Gulf Coast Recovery and Rebuilding Interagency Task Force will benefit from a realignment of existing funds, which was scheduled to be announced the following week. The task force includes NOAA, FEMA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Interior (DOI), and others. Davidson stated that the agencies will need to be flexible with respect to their program silos in order to realize the benefits of synchronization and maximize ecosystem services in the region.

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Brendan Doyle (EPA) asked the extent to which local officials were being included in the task force effort.

Davidson noted that local participation varied from area to area along the coast and that some delicate political issues remain in Louisiana.

Deb Ingram (FEMA) stated she would provide SDR members with a spreadsheet of programs and initiatives being coordinated by an interagency flood task force.

## **IV. Update on the Climate Change Adaptation White Paper**

The latest version of the SDR's draft white paper on the linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation was provided to members in their meeting folders. Members are invited to send comments on the white paper to the Secretariat ([ross.faith@mantech.com](mailto:ross.faith@mantech.com)) no later than COB Monday, December 14th. The writing team is seeking to generate two documents: a 10-12 page white paper to serve as a basis for SDR presentations to the climate change adaptation community; and a much shorter executive summary to serve as the SDR's introductory "calling card" to that same group.

Applegate noted that definitional challenges surrounding terms like "adaptation" and "mitigation" arose during the writing process. Ultimately, each instance of such words may need to be qualified for the sake of clarity. Also, for the purpose of comparison the paper includes a glossary table of terms frequently used by the disaster and climate change communities.

The paper's first section, authored by Sezin Tokar (USAID) and Applegate, is thematically based on the testimony of the President's Science Advisor, Dr. John Holdren, before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on July 30, 2009. Holdren stated: "Given the relationships between climate change and extreme events, the community of researchers, engineers and other experts who work on reducing risks from natural and human-caused disasters will have an important role to play in framing climate change adaptation strategies and in providing information to support decision-making during implementation."

The second section, drafted by Marcy Rockman (EPA), focuses on the implications for extreme weather events and disasters in a changing climate. Section three, written by John Gaynor (NOAA), examines the role of science and technology in addressing adaptation through disaster risk reduction. In section four, Nell Codner (NOAA) and Maria Honeycutt (NOAA) lay out a step by step process for fostering closer collaboration between the disaster and climate change communities.

Keim stated that the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) had updated some of its definitions and encouraged the authors to seek them out on the ISDR website (<http://www.unisdr.org>).

## **V. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

The October and November Meeting Minutes were approved with no opposition or abstentions.

## **VI. Report from the Chair**

Applegate announced that the 35th Annual Natural Hazards Research & Applications Workshop would be held July 10-13, 2010 in Broomfield, CO. Ideas for session topics can be submitted until December 16th at <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/workshop/current.html>.

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Andrea Donnellan (NASA) announced that NASA will host the Earth Observing Missions Applications Workshop from February 1-3, 2010 in Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Andrea Donnellan ([andrea.donnellan@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:andrea.donnellan@jpl.nasa.gov)) if you are interested in attending.

Applegate summarize an "Earthquake 101" briefing which he recently gave for National Security Council (NSC) staff. He noted that the NSC and Homeland Security Council (HSC) now have a combined staff on which Richard Reed serves as the senior White House staffer for resilience.

Allen Dearry will be heading to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on behalf of the SDR to give a presentation at the US Center on disaster risk reduction. 500 copies of the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction* have been sent to the conference for distribution.

## VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

## VIII. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

January 7, 2010	May 6, 2010	September 2, 2010
February 4, 2010	June 3, 2010	October 7, 2010
March 4, 2010	July 1, 2010	November 4, 2010
April 1, 2010	August 5, 2010	December 2, 2010

\*Note: The SDR's 2010 meetings are scheduled to be held at the White House Conference Center.

## IX. 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 Ross Faith ([ross.faith@mantech.com](mailto:ross.faith@mantech.com)).

## X. Contact Information SDR Leadership

David Applegate, Chair, 703-648-6714, [applegate@usgs.gov](mailto:applegate@usgs.gov)  
Margaret Davidson, Vice Chair, 843-740-1220, [margaret.davidson@noaa.gov](mailto:margaret.davidson@noaa.gov)  
Dennis Wenger, Vice Chair, 703-292-8606, [dwenger@nsf.gov](mailto:dwenger@nsf.gov)

## Secretariat

Ross Faith, 703-388-0308, [ross.faith@mantech.com](mailto:ross.faith@mantech.com)  
Emily Wallace, 703-560-7448, [emily.wallace@mantech.com](mailto:emily.wallace@mantech.com)

## XI. Summary of December Actions

Action	Lead	By When
Let Ross ( <a href="mailto:ross.faith@mantech.com">ross.faith@mantech.com</a> ) know if you have comments on the draft SDR disaster risk reduction climate change adaptation white paper.	SDR Members	December 14, 2009
Contact Andrea Donnellan ( <a href="mailto:andrea.donnellan@jpl.nasa.gov">andrea.donnellan@jpl.nasa.gov</a> ) if you are interested in attending NASA's Earth Observing Missions Applications Workshop, February 1-3 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.	SDR Members	ASAP
Visit	SDR Members	December 16, 2009

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<a href="http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/workshop/current.html">http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/workshop/current.html</a> to submit ideas for sessions of the 2010 Natural Hazards Workshop.		
Contact Jack Hayes (jack.hayes@nist.gov) if your agency is interesting in exploring how to make use of the NEES facilities for earthquake research.	SDR Members	Standing
Send Sezin Tokar (stokar@usaid.gov) your ".gov" e-mail address to receive USG-only updates from USAID on global disaster response activities.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Ross (ross.faiht@mantech.com) to receive copies of the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Implementation Plan packets or CD.	SDR Members	Standing
Let Dave or Ross (ross.faiht@mantech.com) know how you use the implementation plans, including when you link to the plans from your agency websites. Send Ross or Dave additional distribution suggestions, including relevant contact information.	SDR Members	Standing