

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

3 May 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center Lincoln Room

---

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

## Co-chairs

David Applegate (USGS)  
Margaret Davidson (NOAA)  
Dennis Wenger (NSF)

## OSTP Liaison

Tamara Dickinson (OSTP)

## Designated Representatives

**BLM** *Edwin Roberson*

*Daniel Lechefsky*

**CDC** Mark Keim

**DHS** Bruce Davis

**DHS/FEMA** Sandra Knight

**DHS/USCG** *Austin Gould*

**DOD** *Al Johnson*

**DOT** Sheila Duwadi

**EOP/OMB** Grace Hu

**EOP/OSTP** Tamara Dickinson

**EPA** Peter Jutro

*Stephen Clark*

**FERC** Pamela Romano (T)

**HUD** *Dana Bres*

**NASA** Craig Dobson

**NGA** Paul Lewis

**NGB** *TBD*

**NIH** Allen Dearry (T)

**NIST** *William Grosshandler*

**NOAA** Margaret Davidson (T)

Laura Furgione

**NPS** Marcy Rockman

**NSF** Dennis Wenger

**OPHS** Estella Jones

**State** *Nicholas Suntzeff*

Fernando Echavarria

**USACE** *Steven Cary*

*Dimitra Syriopoulou*

**USAID** Sezin Tokar

**USDA** *TBD*

**USFS** *Elizabeth Reinhardt*

*Carlos Rodriguez-Franco*

**USGS** David Applegate (T)

**USNRC** Brian Sheron

## Other Attendees

**DHS** Mary Ellen Hynes

**DHS/FEMA** Tim Boden

Beth Norton

**EPA** Brendan Doyle

Paul Kudarauskas

**NASA** Francis Lindsay

**NIST** Marc Levitan

**NOAA** David Green

David Helms (T)

**NOAA** Tracy Rouleau

Chris Strager

**NSF** Gregory Anderson (T)

**State** Jyl Kuczynski

**USACE** Andrew Bruzewicz

**USCG** Tung Ly (T)

**USFS** Glenn Bethel

Everett Hinkley

**USGS** Lind Gee (T)

Bill Leith (T)

**USNRC** Brett Rini

**NCSE** Peter Saundry

Shelley Kossak

**Wilson Center** Lea Shanley

**Secretariat** Bret Schothorst

Barbara Haines-Parmelee

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions

10:05 Presentation: Upcoming NCSE Conference in January  
2013 Focused on Environmental Disaster Forecasting,  
Preparedness, and Resilience

10:25 Update on the Development of the Disasters Societal  
Benefit Area of the National Earth Observations Strategy

10:40 Agency Roundtable Budget Discussion

11:10 Presentation: FEMA Report *Crisis Response and Disaster  
Resilience 2030: Forging Strategic Action in the Age of  
Uncertainty*

11:45 Report from the Co-chairs and Approval of Minutes

11:50 Report from the OSTP Liaison

11:55 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- Agenda
- FEMA Presentation Slides
- Draft April Meeting Minutes

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Co-chair Dennis Wenger (NSF) called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m., and participants introduced themselves.

## **II. Presentation: Upcoming NCSE Conference in January 2013 on Environmental Disaster Forecasting, Preparedness, and Resilience**

Wenger introduced Peter Saundry, who serves as Executive Director of the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), a non-partisan organization of scientists, environmentalists, entrepreneurs, and policy makers working to improve the scientific basis of environmental decision-making. Saundry briefed the SDR on NCSE's upcoming annual conference – January 15-17, 2013, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC – focused on environmental disaster forecasting, preparedness, and resilience.

During his presentation, Saundry briefly reviewed the mission of NCSE, which facilitates a neutral discussion forum for the leaders of various institutions to come together to collectively work on and advance environmental science issues of importance. He also highlighted the overarching goals and themes for their upcoming conference, which aims to develop strategies to combine environmental disaster science and policy to yield real-world solutions and serve as a launching pad for new initiatives, partnerships, and ways of thinking. According to Saundry, three vertical themes and three cross-cutting themes will be addressed during the conference. The core vertical themes are: 1) cascading disasters; 2) the intersection of the built and natural environment; and 3) disasters as mechanisms of ecological change. The core cross-cutting themes are: 1) rethinking recovery and expanding the vision of mitigation; 2) human behaviors and their consequences; and 3) “no regrets” resilience. Saundry noted that the conference will involve hundreds of participants from multiple sectors, including research, education, business, civil service, media, and government and will feature a mix of keynote speakers, plenary sessions, symposiums, lectures, and workshops.

Regarding a collaboration effort between the SDR and NCSE, Saundry raised the possibility for NCSE to engage the SDR agencies in the planning process to ensure that the conference agenda falls in line with and furthers the Federal government objectives on the issue of creating more disaster resilient communities. Saundry stated that the SDR could facilitate this collaboration by: 1) engaging key thinkers and practitioners in the planning process; 2) linking the conference to ongoing work and upcoming opportunities; and 3) designing sessions to connect, engage, and achieve outcomes. SDR members who would like to get involved in the NCSE planning process by proposing conference themes, panel sessions, and speaker ideas should send their suggestions to Peter Saundry ([psaundry@ncseonline.org](mailto:psaundry@ncseonline.org)) or Shelley Kossak ([shelley@ncseonline.org](mailto:shelley@ncseonline.org)) by June 8, 2012. For more general event information, Saundry directed the SDR to visit the NCSE annual conference website at [www.EnvironmentalDisasters.net](http://www.EnvironmentalDisasters.net).

In response to Saundry's call for NCSE collaboration with the SDR, Wenger brought up social science as an integral part of the disaster management cycle – specifically the recovery phase as it relates to resilience and sustainability – and suggested that NCSE consider including social science researchers and practitioners as a component of the conference agenda to ensure that the discipline is well represented. Margaret Davidson (NOAA) agreed with this assessment and mentioned that representatives on the core conference planning group have discussed devoting an entire plenary session or workshop to social science disaster issues. Wenger also noted that it may be beneficial for NCSE to attend the upcoming annual Natural Hazards Research and Application Workshop in July facilitated by the Natural Hazards Center in Boulder, CO, as there will be several social science researchers and practitioners in attendance that could be tapped for information and resources.

Sandra Knight (FEMA) indicated that the NCSE conference overlaps with a key deadline for FEMA to submit the National Mitigation Framework document to the White House. Presidential Policy Directive 8 directed the development of a National Mitigation Framework to address how the U.S. will develop, employ, and coordinate core mitigation capabilities to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Knight had originally hoped that the conference could help shape the framework's development, but due to the conflicting dates, Knight proposed that the framework inform the conference's themes and goals instead. Saundry welcomed this partnership and suggested that the conference could play a role in the application and implementation phases of the framework as well.

As the discussion drew to a close, Mary Ellen Hynes (DHS S&T) raised concern over the ability of Federal employees to attend the NCSE conference in light of the recent scandal involving GSA. She suggested NCSE get advanced approval by Congress and any other necessary Federal regulators to ensure that the SDR agencies can attend freely without any repercussions. The suggestion was well received by Saundry, who stated that he will perform due diligence on the issue to make certain that no objections or red flags are raised during the planning process and at the conference itself with regards to the attendance and participation of Federal employees.

### **III. Update on the Development of the Disasters Societal Benefit Area of the National Earth Observations Strategy**

Tammy Dickinson (OSTP) introduced David Helms (NOAA), who serves as co-lead – along with Bill Leith (USGS) – for the disasters societal benefit area (SBA) of the 2012 assessment of national Earth-observing assets in support of the National Earth Observations (NEO) Strategy. The assessment of the disasters SBA is part of a broader effort covering 13 societal benefit areas, which will guide OSTP's creation of a 10-year strategic implementation plan as required by Congress to allocate and prioritize future Federal resources for the development, deployment, and maintenance of critical Earth-observing systems and to inform the President's FY 2014 budget and beyond. David Applegate (USGS) noted that Leith is taking over the Co-lead role from Lind Gee (USGS), who will be returning to her full-time job at the USGS Albuquerque Seismological Laboratory in Albuquerque, NM.

Helms provided an update on the development of the disasters SBA since initially briefing the SDR on the issue at the Subcommittee's March meeting. Since March, Helms has solicited key input of Earth-observing asset information from Federal agency subject matter experts (SMEs) in many of the three major sub-areas of hazards (1. Air – Severe Thunderstorms, Winter Storms, Hurricanes, Volcanoes (Ash), Technological (Air), Heat Waves, and Solar/Magnetic Storms; 2. Land – Wildfires, Volcanoes (Land), Landslides, Earthquakes, and Technological (Land); and 3. Water – Floods (Fresh), Technological (Water), Coastal Inundation (Storm Surge), Coastal Inundation (Tsunami), and Erosion) and has facilitated several workshops focused on incorporating value chain elements into their analysis that traces the linkages between Earth observations and societal benefit and employs an impact-based, swing-weighted approach to assessing the relative performance and criticality of inputs at each level.

Moving forward, Helms noted that he has scheduled additional workshops to gather the remaining information required for the assessment but is still in need of the following: SMEs for the remaining workshop on Emergency Operations Center Response and Recovery; incident commander SMEs from EPA and USCG; and risk mitigation SMEs from FEMA's National Hurricane Program. If your agency would like to contribute Earth-observing asset information to the NEO Strategy development effort and the disasters SBA, please contact Helms as soon as possible ([david.helms@noaa.gov](mailto:david.helms@noaa.gov)) as he is gathering the data on a very short timeline.

In regards to a question from Leith on the review process and schedule for finalizing the NEO Strategy documents, Helms stated that the deadline for completion of the full NEO Strategy report is September 1<sup>st</sup> and that the SBA data gathering phase will be completed in the next few weeks and provided to the NEO

Strategy leadership. Once the SBA phases have been completed and submitted, the NEO Strategy working groups will conduct roll-ups of the SBA reports' contents to identify Earth-observing asset commonalities and streamline the information.

Knight mentioned that FEMA is interested in contributing information to the assessment but doesn't have the personnel depth to attend every workshop. She recommended interfacing with FEMA's NOAA liaison to help track down the end users of the asset information to get their perspective, which, from a FEMA standpoint, is the most relevant and critical. Helms stated that he had productive discussions with a few FEMA representatives already – specifically regarding storm and tsunami surge, evacuation planning, and the National Flood Insurance Program from a geospatial information context – but plans to dive deeper into their agency resources and will follow-up with Knight for more SME contact information.

Bruce Davis (DHS S&T) recommended an additional resource for Earth-observing asset information that may be useful for this purpose. The Geospatial Management Office at DHS recently released the Federal Interagency Geospatial Concept of Operations (GeoCONOPS), which is a geospatial technology application for emergency response that facilitates an understanding of how the coordination of disaster response geospatial activities can be improved at the Federal level. Davis offered to put Helms in touch with the DHS individuals who are responsible for managing the program with the hopes that the GeoCONOPS information would add value to the overall assessment process.

Paul Lewis (NGA) apologized to Helms for the delay in getting him the necessary Earth-observing asset information from his organization. Lewis stated that soon he will be able to provide data regarding the NGA NextView license for commercial imagery, which is a substantial satellite resource for the Federal disaster mission area partners and will be pertinent to the NEO Strategy activities.

Stating that he has participated in a few of the NEO Strategy workshops to date and praised the effective method undertaken by Helms for gathering and evaluating current Federal agency capabilities and requirements for Earth-observing systems, Craig Dobson (NASA) raised the point that NASA has geospatial assets currently on the drawing board that are not yet fully functional or operational but will provide latent or future use to a number of the SBAs. Since this broader information space isn't being captured in the first part of the data gathering process, Dobson wondered if there will be a gap analysis in an additional phase to look at these future capabilities. Helms noted that the initial data gathering phase focuses solely on current Federal capabilities; however, a future phase will address what Earth-observing technologies will be available and that the agencies will have access to in 10 years that will satisfy the key objectives of the NEO Strategy.

#### **IV. Agency Roundtable Budget Discussion**

Continued from the SDR's March meeting, Dickinson led a follow-up agency roundtable budget discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities of the President's FY 2013 budget for the Federal disaster reduction S&T portfolio, both concerning programs within SDR agencies themselves and the impact on interagency work. SDR agencies who participated in this conversation at the meeting were USGS and USNRC. Although the discussion was cut short due to time constraints – which precluded all SDR members from participating – agencies were encouraged to send their budget outlook write-ups to Dickinson in order to provide OSTP with insight into any major changes in hazard-related S&T spending in agency budgets for the coming fiscal year.

#### **V. Presentation: FEMA Report *Crisis Response and Disaster Resilience 2030: Forging Strategic Action in the Age of Uncertainty***

Wenger introduced Tim Baden (FEMA), who filled in and presented on FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) on behalf of David Kaufman (FEMA), who was unable to attend the meeting. Baden

stated that FEMA launched the SFI to promote broad and long-term thinking on the major effects that the rapidly changing world can have on the emergency management community. Because FEMA is only one member of the broad emergency management community, the SFI engaged all levels of government, non-profits, businesses, and individuals with the hope that, by understanding the potential future environment, organizations will better comprehend and anticipate risk and take advantage of opportunities.

Baden began the presentation by providing an overview of the four main goals of the SFI, which are to:

1) understand the factors driving change that will impact emergency and disaster management over a 20-year horizon; 2) develop a shared sense of direction and urgency in the emergency management community that enables a drive to action; 3) collectively prepare for the future across multi-sectors; and 4) plan for and take action to meet the evolving needs of the emergency management community. Baden also covered the principal drivers behind the development of the SFI:

- Changing Role of the Individual;
- Climate Change;
- Critical Infrastructure;
- Evolving Terrorist Threat;
- Global Interdependencies;
- Government Budgets;
- Technological Innovation and Dependency;
- Universal Access to and Use of Information; and
- U.S. Demographic Shifts.

He additionally shared outcomes from recent scenario building workshops that focused on understanding prospective strategic needs and the future landscape of crisis response and disaster resilience. Baden highlighted several findings, including: the country will face increasing complexity and decreasing predictability; future resource constraints are seemingly unavoidable; individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities, and the private sector will likely play an increasingly active role in meeting emergency management needs; and trust between the public and government must be strengthened.

As Baden mentioned to close his briefing, FEMA welcomes partners to sustain the SFI effort and to apply the findings across the emergency management community. To get involved with the SFI and to receive regular updates and information on engagement opportunities, please contact [FEMA-OPPA-SFI@fema.gov](mailto:FEMA-OPPA-SFI@fema.gov). SDR members were also encouraged to join the online dialogue at <http://www.fema.ideascale.com> or visit FEMA's website for more information: [http://www.fema.gov/about/programs/oppa/strategic\\_foresight\\_initiative.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/about/programs/oppa/strategic_foresight_initiative.shtm).

## **VI. Report from the Co-Chairs and Approval of Minutes**

The April meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Wenger reminded members that the SDR's International Working Group (IWG) will meet the first Thursday of every month from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the WHCC's Lincoln Room. At the working group's May meeting, the IWG will primarily discuss the SDR's role as the U.S. National Platform for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

Touching on an item that she brought up earlier in the meeting, Knight mentioned that the National Mitigation Framework is currently under development at FEMA and stated that she may be reaching out to SDR members individually to get more information and perspective on their agency's disaster mitigation operations plans for a section in the framework focused on interagency activities.

As a reminder and stemming from the presentations and subsequent panel discussion at our February SDR meeting, Lea Shanley from the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars would like to

host a follow-up workshop September 13-14, 2012 on the use of social media, crowdsourcing, and related technologies for the disaster management process. The proposed workshop would bring together Federal agency staff, practitioners, and members of the digital volunteer community to explore the current and potential future uses of these technologies and methods by Federal agencies for disaster management, as well as to identify: 1) the key policy and legal challenges (e.g., privacy and liability); 2) potential risk management actions (e.g., cybersecurity); and 3) mechanisms for coordination between the Federal agencies and digital volunteer communities (e.g., CrisisMappers, Open Street Map, etc.). SDR members who would like to contribute to the planning process – either by co-sponsoring the workshop, volunteering time, or suggesting panel speakers and topics of discussion for the event – should contact the SDR Secretariat ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)).

**VII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

**VIII. Future Meetings**

SDR meetings will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the dates listed below in the Lincoln Room of the White House Conference Center.

**2012**

Thursday, January 5	Thursday, May 3	Thursday, September 6
Thursday, February 2	Thursday, June 7	Thursday, October 4
Thursday, March 1	*Thursday, July 12	Thursday, November 1
Thursday, April 5	**Thursday, August 2	Thursday, December 6

\*We are shifting the July meeting to the second Thursday of the month to avoid proximity to the July 4th holiday.

\*\*Subject to cancellation.

**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 Bret Schothorst ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)).

**X. Contact Information**

**SDR Leadership**

David Applegate	Co-chair	703-648-6600	<a href="mailto:applegate@usgs.gov">applegate@usgs.gov</a>
Margaret Davidson	Co-chair	843-740-1220	<a href="mailto:margaret.davidson@noaa.gov">margaret.davidson@noaa.gov</a>
Dennis Wenger	Co-chair	703-292-8606	<a href="mailto:dwenger@nsf.gov">dwenger@nsf.gov</a>
Tamara Dickinson	OSTP Liaison	202-456-6105	<a href="mailto:tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov">tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov</a>

**Secretariat**

Bret Schothorst	703-388-0312	<a href="mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com">bret.schothorst@mantech.com</a>
Barbara Haines-Parmelee	703-388-0309	<a href="mailto:barbara.haines-parmelee@mantech.com">barbara.haines-parmelee@mantech.com</a>

**XI. Summary of May Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>By When</b>
Let Peter Saundry (psaundry@ncseonline.org) or Shelley Kossak (shelley@ncseonline.org) know if you would like to get involved in the planning process for the next NCSE annual conference January 15-17, 2013 focused on environmental disasters by proposing themes, panel sessions, and speaker ideas.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	ASAP
Send David Helms (david.helms@noaa.gov) an email if you would like to contribute Earth-observing asset information to the assessment of the disasters SBA of the NEO Strategy.	SDR Members	ASAP
Contact the Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) to contribute to the planning process of an upcoming Wilson Center workshop September 13-14, 2012 focused on the use of social media, crowdsourcing, and related technologies for the disaster management process, either by co-sponsoring the workshop, volunteering time, or suggesting panel speakers and topics of discussion for the event.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	ASAP
Contact FEMA-OPPA-SFI@fema.gov to get involved with FEMA’s SFI and to receive regular updates and information on engagement opportunities.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Send Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) a brief write-up highlighting any major changes in hazard-related, disaster reduction S&T spending for your agency in the President’s FY 2013 budget.	SDR Members	Standing
Please consider supporting the work of the SDR and its Secretariat through a contribution from your agency. Let Dave (aplegate@usgs.gov) know if you need an agency-specific request letter.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) to pass along issues, concerns, and information from your agency to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) if it would be helpful for OSTP to issue a letter to your Department requesting new (or re-affirmed) designation of representatives. Ideas for other entities that should be represented on the SDR are also welcome.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact Dennis Wenger (dwenger@nsf.gov) if your agency is able to provide funding support to the University of Colorado-Boulder’s Natural Hazards Center.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Contact the Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) if you are interested in participating in the SDR Coastal Inundation Working Group.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	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 and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Contact Bret (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) to receive copies of the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Implementation Plan packets or CD.	SDR Members	Standing