

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

12 September 2013, 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*
CDC Mark Keim (T)
DHS Bruce Davis (T)
DHS/FEMA *Roy Wright*
DHS/USCG *Robert Thomas*
DOD *Al Johnson*
DOE *Patricia Hoffman*
DOT *Sheila Duwadi*
EOP/OMB *Grace Hu*
EOP/OSTP *Tamara Dickinson*
EPA *Peter Jutro*
Stephen Clark

FERC *Marsha Palazzi*
HUD *Dana Bres*
NASA Craig Dobson (T)
NGA *Paul Lewis*
NGB *TBD*
NIH *Aubrey Miller*
NIST Marc Levitan (T)
NOAA Margaret Davidson (T)
Christopher Strager
NPS *Marcy Rockman*
NSF Dennis Wenger
OPHS Estella Jones (T)

State *Fernando Echavarría*
USACE *Steven Cary*
Dimitra Syriopoulou
USAID Sezin Tokar
USDA *TBD*
USFS *Elizabeth Reinhardt*
Carlos Rodriguez-Franco
USGS David Applegate
USNRC Steven West

Other Attendees

CEQ Susan Ruffo
DHS Mitch Erickson (T)
Mary Ellen Hynes
DHS/FEMA Rachel Sears (T)
DOI Jenna Sloan
EOP/OSTP Katrina Laygo

EPA Brendan Doyle (T)
Paul Kudarauskas
Keely Maxwell
HUD Josh Sawislak
NOAA Maria Honeycutt (T)

USDA Glenn Bethel (T)
USGS Kris Ludwig
Secretariat Bret Schothorst
Barbara Haines-Parmele

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Report from the Co-chairs and Approval of Minutes
10:25 Briefing: Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force
Strategy Report
11:10 Briefing: President's Climate Action Plan
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- September Meeting Agenda
- Draft July Meeting Minutes
- USGS SAFRR Tsunami Scenario Handout
- FEMA America's PrepareAthon! Fact Sheet

I. Welcome and Introductions

National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Co-chair David Applegate (USGS) called the September meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. in the Lincoln Room of the White House Conference Center (WHCC), and participants introduced themselves.

II. Report from the Co-chairs and Approval of Minutes

The July monthly meeting minutes were approved with one change: Marc Levitan (NIST) noted that Eric Letvin (NIST) should be added to the July minutes as a teleconference participant. Letvin phoned into the meeting for Levitan while he was on annual leave.

As September is National Preparedness Month, Rachel Sears (FEMA) drew the SDR's attention to the recently unveiled America's PrepareAthon! initiative, which is a nationwide, community-based campaign for action to increase emergency preparedness and resilience through hazard-specific drills, group discussions, and preparedness exercises. According to Sears, the goals of the project are to: 1) build a more secure and resilient nation by increasing the number of citizens who understand the hazards most relevant to their community; 2) know the corresponding protective actions, mitigation measures, and community plans; 3) practice a real-time behavior to increase their preparedness; and 4) contribute to increased whole community preparedness planning. Sears also noted that several different types of hazards are part of the initiative. In the spring, the focus will be on learning protective actions, mitigation measures, and community plans for tornados, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. In the fall, the emphasis will be put on earthquakes, hazardous materials, pandemic flu, and winter weather. Sears added that practicing for other local hazards will be part of the project as well.

The first official nationwide America's PrepareAthon! events will occur in spring 2014 and are scheduled to take place all across the U.S. Participants can register online at <http://www.fema.gov/americas-prepareathon-beginning-december-2013>. The initiative is linked to the recently released community preparedness report by FEMA, the *Preparedness in America: Research Insights to Increase Individual, Organizational, and Community Action* study. The study is an extensive analysis of national household data on preparedness that highlights the benefit of whole community collaboration to increase preparedness. The report can found here: http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/f9728f1bf52a691b2602d7d49cd423a9/20130904_Preparedness+in+America_FINAL_508.pdf.

The America's PrepareAthon! initiative draws on many of the lessons learned from the Great ShakeOut nationwide earthquake preparedness drills, which last year engaged nearly 20 million people in practicing what to do in an earthquake and consider how to prepare. This year's drill will take place on October 17 in 42 states and territories. Agencies are encouraged to sign up at: <http://www.shakeout.org/>. A drill manual specifically geared toward Federal agencies and facilities can be found at: http://www.shakeout.org/downloads/ShakeOutDrillManualGovernment_v2.pdf. More background on the evolution of this drill can be found in a just-released briefing sheet put out by the four-agency National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) (<http://www.nehrp.gov/pdf/SeismicWavesSep13.pdf>).

Also in the report from the Co-chairs, Applegate brought up the recently released tsunami scenario on the effects of a magnitude 9.1 earthquake occurring offshore of the Alaska Peninsula and its potential impacts to urban centers and port communities on the California coast (http://www.usgs.gov/natural_hazards/safrr/projects/tsunamiscenario.asp). A USGS-led team made up of both Federal and state agencies modeled the tsunami developed the scenario to teach preparedness and inform those who are responsible for making mitigation decisions before a future tsunami as well as those who will need to make rapid decisions during such an event. Applegate noted that he will plan to have a briefing on this topic at an upcoming SDR meeting, possibly in October.

Co-chair Dennis Wenger (NSF) reminded members that the SDR's International Working Group (IWG) will meet on the same day as the full Subcommittee meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the WHCC's Truman Room on the third floor. At the working group's September meeting, the IWG will: 1) hear about some upcoming APEC workshops; and 2) continue discussing options for restructuring the U.S. National Platform for the United Nations (UN) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

III. Briefing: Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Strategy Report

Applegate introduced Josh Sawislak (HUD), who is Senior Advisor for Infrastructure with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and serves as the infrastructure lead for President Obama's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force. Sawislak briefed the SDR on the Task Force's *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy*, which was publically released on August 19, 2013.

To open his presentation, Sawislak provided some background information on the Task Force, which was created by Executive Order 13632 on December 7, 2012 to supplement FEMA's recovery efforts in the region and work in conjunction with the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). He stated that the Task Force is chaired by Secretary Shaun Donovan of HUD, with members consisting of the heads of 23 Federal departments, agencies, and White House offices. According to Sawislak, the Task Force primarily seeks "to ensure that the Federal government continues to provide appropriate resources to support affected state, local, and tribal communities to improve the region's resilience, health, and prosperity by building for the future" and to coordinate the Federal investment of the nearly \$50 billion appropriated by Congress in January 2013 through the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act (Sandy Supplemental) for the region impacted by the disaster.

With regards to the *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* issued by the Task Force, Sawislak noted that the primary focuses of the report are to: 1) provide long-term rebuilding recommendations informed by an assessment of current vulnerabilities to extreme weather events; 2) put forth signature policy initiatives to guide the region's long term recovery, with an emphasis on Federal actions that will enable New York, New Jersey, and other affected states to rebuild resiliently and mitigate against future disasters; and 3) create a plan for monitoring progress and providing transparency on how disaster recovery funds are spent. According to Sawislak, the report's 69 recommendations fall into three categories:

- 1) Recommendations related to the Sandy supplemental appropriation and its role in the recovery effort in the region;
- 2) Recommendations related to the recovery effort in the region that are not directly tied to the supplemental appropriation but will have an impact on the recovery moving forward when/if implemented; and
- 3) Recommendations related to recovery efforts in the Sandy region from future storms or have national policy implications.

These recommendations focus on several key areas, including: ensuring a regionally coordinated resilient approach to infrastructure investment; promoting resilient rebuilding based on current and future risk through innovative ideas; providing families safe, affordable housing options and protecting homeowners; supporting small businesses and revitalizing local economies; addressing insurance challenges, understanding, accessibility, and affordability; and building local governments' capacity to plan for long-term rebuilding and prepare for future disasters. As part of the effort to build local governments' capacity to plan for long-term rebuilding and prepare for future disasters, Sawislak mentioned that this includes Federal funding specifically allocated for states and municipalities to hire local disaster recovery managers in communities in the Sandy-impacted region to enhance long-term planning capabilities. Wenger noted that this will be a difficult challenge for local governments as the disaster recovery manager skill set is in high demand and there are low numbers of individuals who have the requisite experience, training, and academic background to do the job well. Sezin Tokar (USAID) added that

planners and developers must be cognizant of integrating disaster risk reduction guidelines into local and regional rebuilding plans in order to mitigate future threats.

Sawislak noted that the *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* also includes a series of Infrastructure Resilience Guidelines, which are a tool for the Federal government to use when investing in infrastructure, with the dual intention of better protecting communities and ensuring wise investment of scarce public resources. Objectives for the Infrastructure Resilience Guidelines are:

- 1) Comprehensive Analysis (look forward, not backward);
- 2) Transparent and Inclusive Decision Process;
- 3) Regional Resilience;
- 4) Long-Term Efficacy and Fiscal Sustainability;
- 5) Innovative and Environmentally Sustainable (green and gray) Infrastructure Solutions;
- 6) Targeted Financial Incentives; and
- 7) Development and Attainment of Resilience Performance Standards.

According to Sawislak, the Task Force has initiated a process by which the guidelines will ultimately be integrated into all applicable agency regulations and program guidance. He stated that the guidelines are consistent with the goals of the President's *Climate Action Plan* and the overall objective of adopting a regional approach to better decision-making, more efficient and effective projects, and avoidance of unintended impacts. Another key component of this process is to optimize investments in mitigation and resilience, addressing the interdependencies and linkages of current and future infrastructure projects, including investments in Sandy-impacted infrastructure and those hardening non-impacted infrastructure. Sawislak mentioned that the Task Force is also planning to establish a Sandy Regional Infrastructure Team as part of the rebuilding strategy. This team will work to ensure that relevant Federal and state permitting officials have an open channel of communication about the permitting and review of projects once they have been selected, to facilitate early and ongoing coordination between entities and prompt identification and resolution of issues, and to align Federal and state processes, where appropriate. Sawislak noted that it will additionally aim to incentivize the development of more creative and innovative financing solutions for rebuilding projects at the small business and individual levels.

Related to this approach, the strategy also describes a "Rebuild by Design" competition, which is a multi-stage regional design competition that aims to promote innovation while developing and implementing regionally scalable but locally contextual solutions that increase resilience in the region.

The competition centers on four focus areas: 1) Coastal communities; 2) High-density urban environments; 3) Ecological and water body networks; and 4) A catchall "other areas" category.

According to Sawislak, the Task Force has been working closely with state and local jurisdictions, as well as philanthropic and non-profit organizations, to develop this process and a plan to implement winning designs and projects as they are selected. Out of the initial 143 proposals entered by 14 countries, 10 projects were selected and are currently being developed.

Mitch Erickson (DHS S&T) wondered if the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Science Coordination Group (SCG), led by SDR OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (OSTP), will be able to continue its coordination efforts after completing its work with the strategy report. Sawislak and Applegate suggested that the group could play a role in tracking and monitoring the implementation of S&T research funding that was authorized in the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (Sandy Supplemental). Brendan Doyle (EPA) also noted that the group – with assistance from SDR members – could analyze the potential impacts of this R&D funding on future S&T budget requests related to disaster risk reduction for Fiscal Years 2015-2017, and Kris Ludwig (USGS) added that the SCG could conduct a retrospective assessment of the strategy's recommendations to determine if they were effective in increasing the region's resilience and building its capacity to prepare for future disasters.

Please contact Sawislak (josh.sawislak@hud.gov) directly with any questions about his briefing or to engage your agency in the strategy's implementation or recommendations. The final *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* report can be downloaded online at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2013/HUDNo.13-125.

IV. Briefing: President's Climate Action Plan

Applegate introduced Susan Ruffo, who is Deputy Associate Director for Climate Change Adaptation at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). She manages the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, which focuses on strengthening Federal policies and programs to better prepare the Nation to respond to climate change impacts. She presented the President's *Climate Action Plan* to the SDR and outlined ways that the Subcommittee can engage in the plan's implementation and follow-on activities.

Ruffo noted that the plan dovetails nicely with the *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* in that the two reports were developed in parallel during the same timeframe with similar objectives in mind, most notably to prepare for climate change by understanding its risks and adapting to its potential impacts – the increased frequency and intensity of disasters being one. She outlined that the plan does not necessarily emphasize setting up a separate process for assessing climate change risk; it's more about integrating this additional threat into the risk reduction decisions that are already being made at the Federal, state, and local levels and how to do that in the most effective way by bridging the disconnect between researchers, practitioners, and policy makers across the country.

For background information, the President's *Climate Action Plan* was released on June 25, 2013 and highlights three key components:

- 1) **Cut Carbon Pollution in America:** In 2012, U.S. carbon emissions fell to the lowest level in two decades even as the economy continued to grow. To build on this progress, the Administration is putting in place tough new rules to cut carbon pollution – just like for other toxins like mercury and arsenic – so the health of the nation's children is protected and the economy moves toward American-made clean energy sources that will create good jobs and lower home energy bills.
- 2) **Prepare the U.S. for the Impacts of Climate Change:** Even as new steps are taken to reduce carbon pollution, additional preparations must occur for the impact of a changing climate that is already being felt across the country. Moving forward, the Administration will help state and local governments strengthen our roads, bridges, and shorelines so people's homes, businesses and way of life can be better protected from severe weather and disasters.
- 3) **Lead International Efforts to Combat Global Climate Change and Prepare for Its Impacts:** Just as no country is immune from the impacts of climate change, no country can meet this challenge alone. That is why it is imperative for the U.S. to couple action at home with leadership internationally. America must help forge a truly global solution to this global challenge by galvanizing international action to significantly reduce emissions (particularly among the major emitting countries), prepare for climate impacts, and drive progress through the international negotiations.

Ruffo noted that there are several critical areas of the plan where SDR can play a role, including: facilitating resilient investments and policies through S&T-based value assessments; considering more resilient green and gray infrastructure, building codes, natural defense mechanisms, and land use planning methods; examining ways to address affordability challenges posed by hazards insurance programs; developing comprehensive, consistent, and science-based regional and national flood risk standards; and expanding a public understanding of the importance of resilient land and water use through data sharing and increased information and data toolkit availability. She also mentioned that there would be value in keeping the Sandy Task Force SCG together to help inform the implementation of the *Climate Action Plan* objectives as well as the *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* recommendations.

Mary Ellen Hynes (DHS S&T) emphasized that elements of effective fire protection and an increased resiliency to commercial and residential fire should be included in building codes, plans, and policies related to climate change. Sawislak noted that during development of the *Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy* report, gas industry officials stated that they are looking into ways to automate and streamline their grid and distribution processes in order to make them more efficient and resilient to fire during disasters. Keely Maxwell (EPA) wondered if the *Climate Action Plan* addresses the secondary ecological impacts of climate change that could affect a community's quality of life, like public health hazards such as disease outbreaks and air and water contamination. Ruffo stated that the plan includes provisions to help train public health professionals and community leaders to prepare their communities for the health consequences of climate change, including through effective communication of health risks and resilience measures.

Mark Keim (CDC) added that his agency has been pushing for public health concerns to be included in the conversation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation for many years, and he has noticed over time that models of community resilience do not adequately represent human health vulnerability. Keim stated that because roughly 85 to 90 percent of the deaths that occur during disasters occur during the impact phase when no response is possible, a greater emphasis should be placed on preventative human health mitigation and preparedness actions in order to save lives. Erickson capped off the discussion by noting that the U.S. government can be more effective in its climate change message by regionalizing its impacts and parameters to reach a broader audience and reduce the politicization of the message in various parts of the country. Ruffo added that the message could also be enhanced by providing climate change impact information specific to different sectors of the economy (e.g., agriculture, transportation, health, energy, etc.).

If SDR member agencies have additional ideas of how the SDR can get involved with CEQ follow-on activities associated with the *Climate Action Plan*, please contact Ruffo (Susan.L.Ruffo@ceq.eop.gov), copying our OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (Tamara.L.Dickinson@ostp.eop.gov) and SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com). For more information, the full version of the plan can be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/image/president27sclimateactionplan.pdf>.

V. Adjournment

Applegate adjourned the SDR September meeting at 12:01 p.m.

VI. Future Meetings

SDR meetings in 2013 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:

2013

- ✓ Thursday, October 3
- ✓ Thursday, November 7
- ✓ Thursday, December 5

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 the SDR Secretariat Bret Schothorst (bret.schothorst@mantech.com).

VIII. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

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

Secretariat

Bret Schothorst	703-388-0312	bret.schothorst@mantech.com
Barbara Haines-Parmele	703-388-0309	barbara.haines-parmele@mantech.com

IX. Summary of September Actions

Action	Lead	By When
Reach out to Josh Sawislak (josh.sawislak@hud.gov) to engage SDR member agencies in the implementation or recommendations of the <i>Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy</i> .	SDR Members	ASAP
Contact Susan Ruffo (Susan_L_Ruffo@ceq.eop.gov) copying the OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (Tamara_L_Dickinson@ostp.eop.gov) and SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) with ideas of how the SDR member agencies can get involved with follow-on activities associated with the President's <i>Climate Action Plan</i> .	SDR Members	ASAP
Contact the SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) and OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) with ideas or suggestions for a path forward of how the SDR can address the issue of Federal geospatial and remote sensing data interoperability and availability identified in our post-Sandy S&T lessons learned white paper.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Send brief write-ups outlining the impacts that budget sequestration cuts are having on your agency's disaster reduction S&T activities in FY 2013 as well as an outlook of the President's FY 2014 budget request to the SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) copying our OSTP Liaison (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov).	SDR Members	Standing
Email the SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) and OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) if willing to pilot an assessment of the progress of the short-, mid-, and long-term goals outlined in an SDR Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction implementation plans.	SDR Members	Standing
Contact OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) and the SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) to participate in the OSTP Big Data initiative to incorporate public-facing Federal natural hazards data sets to Data.gov or to suggest needed tech tools and apps for information sharing ahead of future emergencies or natural disasters.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing

<p>Please consider supporting the work of the SDR and its Secretariat through a contribution from your agency. Let Co-chair David Applegate (applegate@usgs.gov) know if you need an Agency- or Department-specific request letter.</p>	<p>SDR Members</p>	<p>Standing</p>
<p>Contact Co-chair Dennis Wenger (dwenger@nsf.gov) if your agency is able to provide funding support to the University of Colorado-Boulder's Natural Hazards Center.</p>	<p>SDR Members and Federal Colleagues</p>	<p>Standing</p>
<p>Contact OSTP Liaison Tammy Dickinson (tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov) if it would be helpful for OSTP to issue a letter to your agency or department requesting new (or re-affirmed) designation of official representatives. Ideas for other entities that should be represented on the SDR are also welcome.</p>	<p>SDR Members</p>	<p>Standing</p>