

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

10 September 2015, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center Lincoln Room

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

## Co-chairs

David Applegate (USGS)  
Margaret Davidson (NOAA)  
Tamara Dickinson (OSTP)  
Dennis Wenger (NSF)

## Designated Representatives

**BLM** *Edwin Roberson*  
**CDC** Mollie Mahany  
**DHS** Mary Ellen Hynes  
**DHS/FEMA** *Roy Wright*  
**DHS/USCG** *Robert Thomas*  
**DOD** *Al Johnson*  
**DOE** *Patricia Hoffman*  
**DOT** *Sheila Duwadi*  
**EOP/OMB** *Michael Clark*  
**EOP/OSTP** Jack Meszaros  
**EPA** Brendan Doyle (T)  
Stephen Clark

**FERC** *Marsha Palazzi*  
**HUD** *Dana Bres*  
**NASA** Craig Dobson  
**NGA** *Patricia Allen Aquinas*  
**NGB** *TBD*  
**NIH** *Aubrey Miller*  
**NIST** Steve Cauffman  
**NOAA** *Margaret Davidson*  
*Laura Furgione*  
**NPS** *Marcy Rockman*  
**NSF** Dennis Wenger  
**OPHS** *Estella Jones*

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

## Other Attendees

**DHS** Mitch Erickson (T)  
**DHS/FEMA** Doug Ham  
Katherine Buckingham  
Kevin Coleman  
Zachary Kittrie  
Kirsten Roth  
**EOP/CEQ** Sam Medlock  
**EOP/NSC** Josh Barnes  
Eric Letvin  
**EPA** Eric Koglin (T)  
Keely Maxwell

**EPA** Rebecca Phillips  
Gregory Sayles  
**NASA** Gerald Bawden  
**NIH** April Bennett (T)  
**NOAA** Tom Graziano (T)  
Lindsey Kraatz (T)  
Paul Schlatter (T)  
**NSF** David Mendonca  
**USACE** Mary Cialone  
Katherine Touzinsky  
**USDA** Glenn Bethel (T)

**USGCRP**  
Amanda McQueen (T)  
**USGS** Kris Ludwig  
Teresa Stoepler  
**USNRC** John Nakoski  
**STPI** Chris Clavin  
Zoe Petropoulos  
**SDR Secretariat**  
Bret Schothorst  
Barbara Haines-Parmele

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions  
10:05 Report from the Co-chairs and Approval of Minutes  
10:15 Update on CEQ Activities  
10:30 Update on National Security Council Activities  
10:45 Briefing: *PrepareAthon!* and National Preparedness Month  
11:05 Briefing: USACE Flood and Coastal Risk Management  
R&D Strategic Plan  
11:30 Briefing: EPA Approach to S&T Support During Disasters  
11:55 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- September Meeting Agenda
- Draft July Meeting Minutes

## **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 10:05 a.m. in the Lincoln Room of the White House Conference Center, and participants introduced themselves.

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

The July monthly meeting minutes draft was approved with no changes. The SDR did not meet in August due to longstanding tradition.

Applegate began the meeting by giving kudos to the SDR Windstorm Working Group as their National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP) Biennial Report for Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 was submitted to Congress last week. The final report can be viewed on the White House website at:

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/2013-2014\\_nwirp\\_biennial\\_report.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/2013-2014_nwirp_biennial_report.pdf).

SDR Co-chair Dennis Wenger (NSF) noted that International Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR) Working Group plans to hold its September 10 monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. in the White House Conference Center Jackson Room across the hall. At Thursday afternoon's meeting, the working group: 1) discussed implementation of the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; 2) reviewed a white paper outlining potential options for reshaping the U.S. National Platform for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR); 3) discussed plans within member agencies to mark International Disaster Reduction Day coming up on October 13; and 4) heard an update on the recent activities of the UNISDR Science and Technical Advisory Group (STAG). Please contact the SDR Secretariat ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)) for more information on the IDRR Working Group.

Applegate welcomed the SDR's new OSTP Liaison, Jack Meszaros, who provided an update on the SDR Space Weather Operations, Research, and Mitigation (SWORM) Task Force that is in the process of clearing its National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan documents with the NSTC Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS), the parent body to SDR. She noted that agency principals to CENRS should be receiving those documents within the next week for review and comment, so please be on the lookout. If you have any questions on the latest SWORM draft documents, please contact Bill Murtagh ([William.J.Murtagh@ostp.eop.gov](mailto:William.J.Murtagh@ostp.eop.gov)).

Meszaros also reported that the SDR National Preparedness S&T (NPST) Task Force's review teams are well on their way to completing their rosters of relevant S&T programs and assembling crosswalks of those programs within PPD-8 mission areas. The Task Force will also be standing up a team to develop recommendations on a formal protocol to conduct joint, interagency post-event S&T evaluation and assessment. Please reach out to Chris Clavin ([cclavin@ida.org](mailto:cclavin@ida.org)) of the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) for more information on the NPST.

Craig Dobson (NASA) mentioned an upcoming NASA workshop that will be held jointly with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) October 13-15, 2015, at the NASA Ames Conference Center in Moffett Field, California. According to Dobson, the workshop will focus on constructing a five-year roadmap for developing the suite of products and software to support the needs of the diverse NISAR applied science end-user community and to clearly establish guidelines with regard to project support of applications and data latency to clearly set expectations. Workshop participants will identify key activities (e.g., research/technology development, software or product development, and training campaigns) that can be used to guide NASA and the NISAR project, as well as other agencies and private sector investments in the years leading up to NISAR's launch. Please visit the following link for more information or to RSVP: <http://nisar.jpl.nasa.gov/missionthemes/applications/2015appws/#>.

Meredith Lee (DHS S&T) sent in a report on the SDR Technology and Innovation for Disaster Preparedness (TIDP) Working Group, which is finalizing the roster for a Safety DataPalooza event on Friday, October 30 and activities to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Disasters.Data.gov launch this December. For more information on the activities of the TIDP, please email Lee ([meredith.lee@associates.hq.dhs.gov](mailto:meredith.lee@associates.hq.dhs.gov)).

### **III. Update on CEQ and NSC Activities**

Applegate introduced Sam Medlock from the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as well as Josh Barnes and Eric Letvin from the National Security Council (NSC), who provided an update to SDR members on some ongoing activities at CEQ and the NSC.

Medlock highlighted that the White House Climate Resilience and Insurance Partnership was launched in June 2014 with a White House meeting between Administration officials and representatives of the insurance and reinsurance industries to develop more effective public-private partnerships to promote resilience in the face of severe weather events. NOAA and FEMA are working on enhanced data sharing for flood and weather hazards. The time is ripe for agencies to consider what to ask of industry in terms of models, datasets, studies, or other partnerships. A coordinated suite is being developed in the coming month, and input to that is welcome. Please contact Medlock ([Samantha\\_A\\_Medlock@ceq.eop.gov](mailto:Samantha_A_Medlock@ceq.eop.gov)) for more information.

Medlock also noted that the near-final implementation guidelines for Federal agencies for the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (<http://www.fema.gov/federal-flood-risk-management-standard-ffrms>) developed by the FEMA-led Mitigation Framework Leadership Group (MitFLG) are being circulated to Federal departments and agencies from OMB ahead of final approval by Water Resources Council. As efforts shift to agency-specific implementation, both CEQ and the NSC stand ready to assist with technical questions.

Medlock and Letvin mentioned that FEMA and NOAA are leading the effort to develop a set of Community Climate Resilience Indicators to measure community resilience to hazards and the impacts of climate change. The latest draft document describes categories drawn from definitions provided in the National Mitigation Framework and provides a basis for setting specific goals for communicating resilience and measuring progress toward those goals. That effort contributes to an NSC-led sub-Interagency Planning Committee (IPC) on Community Resilience Indicators, which is conducting a baseline of distinct federally funded or generated indicators. Letvin added that FEMA's threat modeling is being used to map indicators to applications with goal to create a body of knowledge that communities can consult to help determine which are most relevant to their needs.

Regarding an update on a topic discussed at our July meeting, Barnes highlighted a drought-focused NSC sub-IPC is working in conjunction with the National Drought Resilience Partnership to develop a white paper of Federal investments and guidance as well as policy and regulatory changes to address the potential for the Western U.S. drought continue for several more years. Letvin stated that progress is being made on the development of an Executive Order on a Federal Seismic Risk Standard that will update and replace outdated seismic codes for Federal buildings from 1990 and 1994. The draft EO is currently being circulated through the Critical Infrastructure, Security and Resilience IPC.

Letvin also noted that wildfire coordination activities ongoing within the EOP include an upcoming event with the International Association of Fire Chiefs on the wildland-urban interface (WUI) that will take place on Monday, October 19. A sub-IPC is addressing improvements to building codes and standards for Federal buildings in the WUI. Participation from Federal departments and agencies is welcome. Please reach out to Barnes ([Joshua\\_J\\_Barnes@nsc.eop.gov](mailto:Joshua_J_Barnes@nsc.eop.gov)) and Letvin ([Eric\\_J\\_Letvin@nsc.eop.gov](mailto:Eric_J_Letvin@nsc.eop.gov)) for more information on these activities.

#### **IV. Briefing: *PrepareAthon!* and National Preparedness Month**

Applegate introduced Kirsten Roth and Zachary Kittrie from FEMA, who briefed SDR on the America's *PrepareAthon!* campaign and associated activities for National Preparedness Month in September.

Roth noted that *PrepareAthon!* is a national community-based campaign for action that emphasizes increasing emergency preparedness through hazard-specific group discussions, drills, and exercises. The initiative has two specific National *PrepareAthon!* Days on April 30 and September 30 that will provide free resources and tools for different hazards relevant to communities across the country, such as earthquake, flood, hurricane, tornado, wildfire, and winter storm.

The theme for this year's National Preparedness Month is: "Don't Wait. Communicate. Make your Emergency Plan Today." The message has been advertised extensively on television, radio, in print, on billboards, and shared throughout social media channels. Kittrie noted that there are five weekly themes highlighted in the month of September:

- Week 1 (Sept. 1–5) Flood;
- Week 2 (Sept. 6–12) Wildfire;
- Week 3 (Sept. 13–19) Hurricane;
- Week 4 (Sept. 20–26) Power Outage; and
- Week 5 (Sept. 27–30) Lead up to National *PrepareAthon!* Day.

Visit <http://www.Ready.gov/September> and <http://www.Ready.gov/prepare> for more information. To get your agency involved in these preparedness activities in September, please reach out to Roth ([kirsten.roth@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:kirsten.roth@fema.dhs.gov)) and Kittrie ([Zachary.Kittrie@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Zachary.Kittrie@fema.dhs.gov)).

#### **V. Briefing: USACE Flood and Coastal Risk Management R&D Strategic Plan**

Applegate introduced Mary Cialone from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who briefed Subcommittee members on the Corps' draft Flood and Coastal Risk Management R&D Strategic Plan.

Cialone noted that the primary long-range drivers behind the development of the strategy are: rising flood risk; increasing coastal populations and infrastructure; climate change; aging infrastructure; water supply and competing demands; declining ecosystems; and fiscal austerity. The plan develops a five-year road map for future R&D that identifies scientific and engineering solutions to support the Nation's flood risk management challenges as well as conducts R&D to reduce the nation's risk from flood and coastal disasters while energizing the economy, sustaining environmental resources, and promoting community resilience. As Cialone highlighted, the plan is organized around goals aligning to five key challenge themes: 1) Reduced Disaster Risk; 2) Increased Resilience; 3) Sustainable Infrastructure; 4) Systems Approach; and 5) Communication & Collaboration.

In response to Cialone's presentation, Steve Cauffman (NIST) noted that USACE's Flood and Coastal Risk Management R&D Strategic Plan could benefit from adding in a social systems component to its list of key themes. Cauffman underscored that the plan also presents opportunities for partnerships with regards to the work of NIST on its *Community Resilience Planning Guide for Buildings and Infrastructure Systems* as well as its associated Community Resilience Panel on Buildings and Infrastructure Systems. Cauffman added that the first meeting of the panel will take place on November 9, 2015, at the NIST campus in Gaithersburg, MD. More information on the meeting is available at: <http://www.nist.gov/el/20150901panel.cfm>.

Letvin posed a question as to whether the draft plan addressed flood-resistant materials as contained in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Standard 24 on Flood Resistant Design and Construction. Cialone noted that in the "Product and Technology Solutions" section of the plan there is an action to

“develop and/or adapt materials, technologies and techniques for resilient and innovative repair, replacement and/or rehabilitation of critical components,” but that the section could be beefed up more to invoke ASCE 24 specifically. Mollie Mahany (CDC) and Mary Ellen Hynes (DHS S&T) added that engaging state and local partners through the Corps’ district offices in the key actions and challenges of the plan will be critical to its success.

Cialone appreciated the feedback and asked SDR agencies to provide additional comments on the strategic plan via an official review sheet circulated after the meeting by Friday, September 18. Please email your responses directly to Cialone ([Mary.A.Cialone@usace.army.mil](mailto:Mary.A.Cialone@usace.army.mil)) and her colleague Tony Niles ([Anthony.R.Niles@usace.army.mil](mailto:Anthony.R.Niles@usace.army.mil)).

## **VI. Briefing: EPA Approach to S&T Support During Disasters**

Applegate introduced Greg Sayles from EPA, who briefed the Subcommittee on his agency’s approach to S&T technical support during environmental disasters, highlighting the recent West Virginia chemical spill in January 2014 and the Gold King Mine wastewater spill last month affecting the Animas River in Colorado.

According to Sayles, EPA has an internal capability known as ReACHback for Emergency Response (RACER) that was developed by assessing models of emergency response support in EPA region offices and other Federal agencies. RACER establishes a standing reachback coordination capacity (not standing technical teams) for both “Ready” (prepare, practice) and “Response” modes (triage requests, bring best technical expertise to bear, keep communication lines open, reporting to senior leadership) that are nimble to EPA demands during emergencies. This allows a coordinated technical approach to S&T support for disasters that ensures the strongest technical staff and teams can be deployed, related work can be coordinated, efforts can be communicated to senior leaders, and adequate management support is provided for staff engagement.

Sayles noted that during the West Virginia chemical spill, the S&T technical support provided by EPA included chemical fate and transport, analytical chemistry, review of drinking water ingestion screening level, and development of vapor inhalation screening level for site cleanup activities. He added that S&T technical support provided by EPA during the more recent Gold King Mine spill last month was complex and included manning the EPA Office of Research and Development desk at the Emergency Operations Center for over two weeks, review of screening levels for aquatic recreation use, water quality data review and interpretation, standing by with laboratory capacity and technical expertise, and review of watershed monitoring plan.

In response to a question from Barnes inquiring as to how RACER is triggered, Sayles underlined that RACER is considered a standing capacity that can easily ramp up and bring the science to bear in hours instead of weeks or months if there is some short-term acute technical assistance needed – but officially it’s spurred into action through an activation by the EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Research and Development. In response to a question from Meszaros wondering if RACER has been used to reach out to scientists outside of the Federal government for expertise, Eric Koglin (EPA) stated that RACER did not reach out to external stakeholders during the environmental disasters highlighted in the presentation but noted that EPA did so during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Please contact Sayles ([Sayles.Gregory@epa.gov](mailto:Sayles.Gregory@epa.gov)) for more information on EPA’s approach to S&T technical support during environmental disasters.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Applegate adjourned the SDR September meeting at 12:06 p.m. and noted that the group's next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 1 in the White House Conference Center Lincoln Room. Please note that the SDR will not meet in October in the event of a U.S. Government shutdown.

**VIII. SDR 2015 Meeting Calendar**

SDR meetings in 2015 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 unless otherwise noted:

**2015**

- ✓ Thursday, January 8\*
- ✓ Thursday, February 5
- ✓ Thursday, March 5
- ✓ Thursday, April 2
- ✓ Thursday, May 7
- ✓ Thursday, June 4
- ✓ Thursday, July 9\*
- ✓ Thursday, August 6\*\*
- ✓ Thursday, September 10\*
- ✓ Thursday, October 1
- ✓ Thursday, November 5
- ✓ Thursday, December 3

\* January, July, and September meetings shifted to the second Thursday of the month to avoid proximity to holidays. The January and July meetings will be held in Room 430ABC of the White House Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB).

\*\* August meeting 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 the SDR Secretariat Bret Schothorst ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)).

**X. Contact Information**

**SDR Leadership**

David Applegate	Co-chair	703-648-6600	applegate@usgs.gov
Margaret Davidson	Co-chair	843-740-1220	margaret.davidson@noaa.gov
Dennis Wenger	Co-chair	703-292-8606	dwenger@nsf.gov
Tamara Dickinson	Co-chair	202-456-6105	tdickinson@ostp.eop.gov
Jack Meszaros	OSTP Liaison	202-456-6020	Jacqueline_R_Meszaros@ostp.eop.gov

**Executive Secretariat**

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

**XI. Summary of September Actions**

Action	Lead	By When
The next SDR meeting will be held on Thursday, October 1 in the White House Conference Center Lincoln Room.	SDR Members	For Information

Anticipate the clearance process to begin at the CENRS-level the week of September 21 for the SDR SWORM National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan documents.	SDR Members	For Information
Visit the following link to view the SDR WWG final NWIRP Biennial Report to Congress for FY 2013 and 2014: <a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/2013-2014_nwirp_biennial_report.pdf">https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/2013-2014_nwirp_biennial_report.pdf</a> .	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	For Information
Email Mary Cialone (Mary.A.Cialone@usace.army.mil) and Tony Niles (Anthony.R.Niles@usace.army.mil) to comment on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood and Coastal Risk Management R&D Strategic Plan.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Friday, September 18
Reach out to Sam Medlock (Samantha_A_Medlock@ceq.eop.gov) for more information in the Climate Resilience and Insurance Partnership, the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, and the effort to develop Community Climate Resilience Indicators.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Email Josh Barnes (Joshua_J_Barnes@nsc.eop.gov) and Eric Letvin (Eric_J_Letvin@nsc.eop.gov) for more information on the interagency drought proposal sub-IPC, progress on the development of an Executive Order on a Federal Seismic Risk Standard, and wildfire coordination activities including an upcoming WUI event on Monday, October 19.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Contact Kirsten Roth (kirsten.roth@fema.dhs.gov) and Zachary Kittrie (Zachary.Kittrie@fema.dhs.gov) to get your agency involved in upcoming FEMA preparedness activities in September.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing