

# Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

13 December 2016, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center Jackson Room

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

## Co-chairs

David Applegate (USGS)  
Laura Furgione (NOAA)  
Jack Meszaros (OSTP)

## Designated Representatives

<b>ASPR</b> Darrin Donato	<b>EPA</b> Greg Sayles	<b>NSF</b> Greg Anderson
<b>BLM</b> Georgette Fogle	<b>FERC</b> <i>Marsha Palazzi</i>	<b>State</b> <i>Fernando Echavarria</i>
<b>CDC</b> Mollie Mahany (T)	<b>HUD</b> Dana Bres (T)	<b>USACE</b> Tony Niles (T)
<b>DHS</b> Erin Walsh (T)	<b>NASA</b> <i>Craig Dobson</i>	<b>USAID</b> <i>Sezin Tokar</i>
<b>DHS/FEMA</b> <i>Roy Wright</i>	<b>NGA</b> <i>Kerri Dugan</i>	<b>USDA</b> <i>TBD</i>
<b>DHS/USCG</b> <i>Jim Small</i>	<b>NGB</b> <i>TBD</i>	<b>USFS</b> Matt Rollins
<b>DOD</b> <i>Al Johnson</i>	<b>NIH</b> <i>Aubrey Miller</i>	<i>Carlos Rodriguez-Franco</i>
<b>DOE</b> <i>Patricia Hoffman</i>	<b>NIST</b> Steve Cauffman	<b>USGS</b> David Applegate
<b>DOT</b> Sheila Duwadi	<b>NOAA</b> <i>Margaret Davidson</i>	<b>USNRC</b> <i>Edwin Hackett</i>
<b>EOP/OMB</b> <i>Michael Clark</i>	Laura Furgione	<b>USPHS</b> Estella Jones (T)
<b>EOP/OSTP</b> Jack Meszaros	<b>NPS</b> Marcy Rockman	

## Other Attendees

<b>ASPR</b> Brittney Seiler (T)	<b>EPA</b> Felicia Barnett	<b>USFS</b> Mike Cherry (T)
<b>DHS</b> Mitch Erickson (T)	Brendan Doyle	<b>USGS</b> Kris Ludwig (T)
Dan Marasco (T)	Keely Maxwell	Alice Pennaz (T)
<b>DHS/FEMA</b> Emily Blanton (T)	<b>NIH</b> April Bennett (T)	<b>USNRC</b> John Nakoski (T)
Eric Letvin	<b>NOAA</b> Mike Halpert	<b>SDR Secretariat</b>
<b>DOI</b> Jim Douglas	John Ten Hoeve	Bret Schothorst
<b>EOP/NSC</b> Mark Fleming	<b>NSF</b> David Mendonca (T)	Barbara Haines Parmele (T)
<b>EOP/OSTP</b> Greg Shannon	<b>USACE</b> Alex Renaud	

## Agenda

10:00 Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes  
10:05 Co-chairs Report  
10:30 Briefing: CISR Subcommittee R&D Roadmap  
11:00 Briefing: Southeastern U.S. Wildfires  
11:30 Discussion: U.S. Participation at UNISDR Platform Meetings  
11:55 Close and Next Actions

## Handouts

- December Meeting Agenda
- Draft November Meeting Minutes

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) Co-chair David Applegate (USGS) called the December meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. in the White House Conference Center Jackson Room, and participants introduced themselves.

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

The draft of the minutes for the November monthly meeting was approved with no changes.

SDR Co-chair Jack Meszaros (OSTP) provided an update on the NPST Task Force, noting that the group's final report, *Identifying Science and Technology Opportunities for National Preparedness*, is under final clearance consideration. The document was circulated to the official SDR agency representatives for approval last week, and it is also going through a concurrent OMB Circular A-19 clearance process. She made note that the NPST hopes to have the report finalized by the end of this week. Meszaros added that the NPST post-event S&T sub-group is also focused on making progress on the section drafts of its executive summary report for completion in early 2017.

With regards to the Administration transition, Meszaros noted that OSTP is planning to significantly reduce staff over the coming weeks in order to best reorganize around the priorities and needs of the incoming Administration in the New Year. SDR's former OSTP Liaison, Tammy Dickinson, who for the past three-plus years has served as OSTP Principal Deputy Associate Director Environment and Energy, joined the meeting to extend thanks on behalf of herself and OSTP Director John Holdren to SDR representatives for all their hard work on the Subcommittee's important activities over the past eight years of this Administration. A summary of notable SDR accomplishments that was recently sent to the NSTC will be circulated with the December meeting summary and action items email.

Meszaros also added that implementation guidelines will be released soon for the [Executive Order: Establishing a Federal Earthquake Risk Management Standard](#) and the [Executive Order: Wildland-Urban Interface Federal Risk Mitigation](#) that were released earlier this year. Check back with Meszaros ([Jacqueline R. Meszaros@ostp.eop.gov](mailto:Jacqueline_R_Meszaros@ostp.eop.gov)) for links to the guidelines when they become available online in the coming weeks.

Marcy Rockman from the National Park Service briefly mentioned that her agency is preparing to release its *Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy* document later this month. According to Rockman, this substantial document analyzes the broad range of climate risks for cultural heritage and how NPS and its partners can go about addressing those risks. The Strategy document will be posted online on or around Tuesday, December 20: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/culturalresourcesstrategy.htm>.

## **III. Briefing: CISR Subcommittee R&D Roadmap**

Meszaros introduced Greg Shannon from OSTP and Co-chair of the NSTC Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (CISR) Subcommittee, who discussed the *Implementation Roadmap for the National Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Research and Development Plan* now being circulated for concurrence (please note the pre-decisional draft circulated last week is not for public distribution at this point).

Shannon noted that the Nation's security depends on uninterrupted provision of critical infrastructure services, and R&D is needed to better ensure that such services continue uninterrupted during normal conditions and infrequent extreme events. In order to identify and coordinate such R&D, the NSTC will release the Implementation Roadmap for national CISR R&D, which is centered around five challenge areas: 1) Understanding Interdependencies in Infrastructure Vulnerabilities for Improved Decision Making; 2) Position, Navigation, and Timing Support Functions; 3) Resilient, Secure, and Modernized Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Systems Capable of Integration with Legacy Systems; 4) Next-

Generation Building Materials and Applications for Transportation Infrastructure Systems; and 5) Resilient and Secure Energy Delivery Systems.

David Mendonca from NSF was on the phone for the presentation and added additional thoughts with regards to public access infrastructure data and supporting the areas of a holistic perspective, large-scale comparison/validation/prediction, and translation and transition of research. For questions on the CISR R&D Implementation Roadmap, please reach out to Shannon ([Gregory\\_E.Shannon@ostp.eop.gov](mailto:Gregory_E.Shannon@ostp.eop.gov)).

#### **IV. Briefing: Southeastern U.S. Wildfires**

Applegate introduced Matt Rollins from the U.S. Forest Service, who provided a briefing to the SDR regarding the ongoing large Southeastern U.S. wildfires (mainly the Chimney Tops 2 Fire near Gatlinburg, TN).

Rollins stated that beginning in early November, dozens of wildfires burned across the southeastern U.S. states, centered on the southern Appalachians, due to an area of exceptional drought that developed in late October in across large parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. To date, wildfires have burned 1.5 million acres in the Southeast U.S. in 2016. The vast majority of these fires were human-caused, with arson as the principal cause of many. Air quality was extremely low in the region, as fires tended to have extended smoldering periods due to deep organic soil layers.

Rollins added that the Chimney Tops 2 Fire, caused by arson, was the most notable in the media, burning nearly 18,000 acres and necessitating nearly 7,000 firefighters from 21 states to respond to the situation. Overall, the effects of the fires were exacerbated by extended, exceptional drought and strong, sustained winds. There were 14 fatalities and 1,700 damaged or destroyed structures reported, and 14,000 residents in the area were forced to evacuate. A detailed analysis of the fire can be found at: <http://wildfiretoday.com/2016/12/05/analyzing-the-fire-that-burned-into-gatlinburg>.

In addition to Rollins's briefing, other agencies were provided an opportunity to talk about the S&T capabilities that have been brought to bear during this event for response and recovery. SDR Co-chair Laura Furgione with NOAA mentioned that her agency deployed 12 Incident Meteorologists (IMETs) to eight large wildfires from November 2 to December 8 in four states (Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina). Due to the ongoing exceptional drought and very dry vegetation (fuels), NWS IMETs deployed for up to two weeks at a time, which is rare for the Southeast U.S. She added that wildfire smoke plumes drifting over major metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Savannah, and Columbia on multiple days in November caused NWS offices in Peachtree City, Greenville-Spartanburg, and Columbia to issue high-impact briefings and emails to core partners and Air Stagnation Advisory products to the public to alert citizens with respiratory challenges.

Also on this front, Greg Sayles with EPA underlined that his agency recently issued a revised report, *Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials*, designed to help local public health officials prepare for wildfire smoke events and take measures to protect the public. The report is available online at: [https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/wildfire\\_may2016.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/wildfire_may2016.pdf)). EPA Region IV identified the need for additional mobile ambient air-quality monitoring to complement fixed monitoring stations.

Applegate reported on USGS debris-flow hazard assessments in support of the Burned Area Emergency Response Teams and land-management agencies (especially USFS and NPS), as well as rapidly deployable streamgage installation to support NWS flash-flood warnings. USGS is also working with the North Carolina Geological Survey to collect data that will improve debris-flow models and rainfall thresholds for burned areas in the Appalachians.

## **V. Discussion: U.S. Participation at UNISDR Platform Meetings**

To close the meeting, Applegate led a brief discussion regarding U.S. participation in the upcoming UNISDR 2017 Regional and Global Platform Meetings.

The latest draft version of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the Americas was circulated to SDR members, which will be a key outcome of the UNISDR Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas (RP17) that Canada will host in Montreal, Quebec, March 7-9, 2017. IDRR Working Group Co-chair Mollie Mahany from CDC highlighted that Public Safety Canada officials are seeking initial comments on the document and will organize a teleconference with all the countries in the region early in the New Year to review the next version of the RAP and seek further input. In terms of next steps and as part of their planning for the event, Mahany noted that the Canadians are still looking to receive U.S. input on the initial draft agenda as well as gauge interest in U.S. agencies taking on hosting/co-hosting duties and serving as panelists for some of the parallel sessions during the meeting (<http://www.eird.org/rp17/>).

Regarding the upcoming 2017 Global Platform Meeting (May 22-26, 2017, in Cancun, Mexico), the latest draft agenda and two important documents for which UNISDR is seeking comments and input were circulated at the December meeting: the concept note for the Leaders Forum and the consultation paper for the outcome documents of the platform. Applegate asked that SDR members please review these background papers and send any feedback to the SDR Secretariat ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)) by Tuesday, December 20. More information on the Global Platform can be found at: <http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform/en>.

It was added that the Subcommittee plans to further coordinate agency participation on the official U.S. delegations to the platform meetings at the next IDRR Working Group meeting in January. In the interim, Applegate asked that agencies please provide the SDR Secretariat ([bret.schothorst@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)) with expressions of interest in participation on the U.S. delegation for either of these meetings as soon as possible.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Applegate adjourned the SDR December meeting at 11:57 a.m. and noted that the group's next meeting will be held in the New Year on Thursday, January 5, 2017, in the White House Conference Center Lincoln Room.

## **VII. SDR 2017 Meeting Calendar**

SDR meetings in 2017 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:

### **2016**

- ✓ Thursday, January 5
- ✓ Thursday, February 2
- ✓ Thursday, March 2
- ✓ Thursday, April 6
- ✓ Thursday, May 4
- ✓ Thursday, June 1
- ✓ Thursday, July 13\*
- ✓ Thursday, August 3\*\*
- ✓ Thursday, September 7
- ✓ Thursday, October 5
- ✓ Thursday, November 2
- ✓ Thursday, December 7

\* July meeting shifted to the second Thursday of the month to avoid proximity to the Independence Day Federal holiday.

\*\* August meeting subject to cancellation.

**VIII. 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@mantech.com](mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com)).

**IX. Contact Information**

**SDR Leadership**

David Applegate	Co-chair	703-648-6600	<a href="mailto:applegate@usgs.gov">applegate@usgs.gov</a>
Laura Furgione	Co-chair	301-713-0711	<a href="mailto:laura.furgione@noaa.gov">laura.furgione@noaa.gov</a>
Jack Meszaros	Co-chair	202-456-6020	<a href="mailto:Jacqueline_R_Mezzaros@ostp.eop.gov">Jacqueline_R_Mezzaros@ostp.eop.gov</a>

**Executive 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>

**X. Summary of December Actions**

Action	Lead	By When
Note that the next SDR meeting will be held on Thursday, January 5 in the White House Conference Center Lincoln Room.	SDR Members	For Information
View the summary of notable SDR accomplishments in this Administration that was recently sent to the National Science and Technology Council.	SDR Members	For Information
Visit <a href="https://www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/culturalresourcesstrategy.htm">https://www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/culturalresourcesstrategy.htm</a> on Tuesday, December 20 to view the NPS <i>Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy</i> .	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Tuesday, December 20
Provide feedback on UNISDR background papers on the Regional and Global Platform Meetings to the SDR Secretariat ( <a href="mailto:bret.schothorst@mantech.com">bret.schothorst@mantech.com</a> ) by Tuesday, December 20, along with expressions of interest in participation on the U.S. delegation for either of these meetings.	SDR Members	Tuesday, December 20
Reach out to Greg Shannon ( <a href="mailto:Gregory_E_Shannon@ostp.eop.gov">Gregory_E_Shannon@ostp.eop.gov</a> ) with questions on the CISR R&D Implementation Roadmap.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Visit <a href="http://wildfiretoday.com/2016/12/05/analyzing-the-fire-that-burned-into-gatlinburg">http://wildfiretoday.com/2016/12/05/analyzing-the-fire-that-burned-into-gatlinburg</a> for a detailed analysis of the Chimney Tops 2 Fire.	SDR Members and Federal Colleagues	Standing
Send additional disaster-related priorities from your agency for consideration in the new Administration to the SDR Secretariat ( <a href="mailto:Bret.Schothorst@ManTech.com">Bret.Schothorst@ManTech.com</a> ) on a rolling basis.	SDR Members	Standing

Send Dave Applegate an email (applegate@usgs.gov) if you are interested in contributing to the work of the SDR and would like additional documentation or an agency-specific letter.	SDR Members	Standing
Email the SDR Secretariat (bret.schothorst@mantech.com) to suggest external DRR stakeholder groups to invite to present at quarterly SDR meetings on behalf of the U.S. National Platform for UNISDR.	SDR Members	Standing