

MEETING SUMMARY
Washington Climate Advisory Team (CAT)
Forestry Preparation/Adaptation Work Group (Forestry PAWG)
Call #2, 10:15 – 12:00, August 21, 2007

Attendance:

1. Preparation/Adaptation Working Group Members: Greg Ettl, Dave Rolph, Scott Holman, Pete Heide, Bruce Lippke, Jeremy Littel, Dave Peterson, Ann Gygi, Josh Lawler, Jeff Debell, Craig Partridge, Will Littke, Gary Morishima, Hedia Adelsman

Background documents:

(posted at www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/cat_pawg_overview.htm)

1. Agenda
2. Preliminary Discussion Draft Categorization of Issues and Related Strategies

Discussion items and key issues:

1. Recent Items of Interest
 - A review draft is available of the forthcoming report, Adaptation Options for Climate – Sensitive Ecosystems and Resources, including its chapter on National Forests. The report is “Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.4” from the U.S. Climate Change Science Program. This report is very relevant to the PAWG’s work.
 - The soon-to-be concluded redesign of the Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program, under the auspices of the Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, may have implications for funding for climate-change related forest stewardship on private lands.
 - Education materials related to climate change for non-industrial forest landowners may be available from the WSU Extension in King County.
2. Review of Preliminary List of Issues
 - In “Forest Health and Fire Effects in Current Stands”
 - Add increased carbon emission as a distinct issue.
 - Add cost of fire suppression as a distinct issue.
 - Add “novel severity” and “increased number of trees killed” to larger fires issue.
 - Consider the need to define “uncharacteristically large” fires.
 - Change the “pest” issue to be more general, including not just overwintering insect defoliators, but all insect pests and disease agents, including range expansion of pests and disease agents, and including heat

and moisture stress-induced vulnerability of tree hosts. Silvicultural prescriptions, such as slash management following thinning, need to be tailored to specific pest responses to climate change.

- Rename the second issue category “Species’ Physiology, Ecology, and Distribution”.
 - Add the issue of expanding or shifting range of “exotic” species, recognizing the complications of the meaning of “exotic”.
 - Add the distinct issue of changes in invasive species’ effects.
- In “Habitat”
 - List more general issues of impacts to animal species, including threatened and endangered species.
 - Note (this issue) regulatory flexibility in relation to species and habitat.
 - Changes to exotic and/or invasive species could go in this category.
- In “Timber Management and Economics,”
 - Note availability of processing infrastructure as an issue, in relation to the supply of material from thinning.
 - Add landowner harvest decisions and investor decisions in relation to perceived climate change risk, and practices of other landowners.
 - Recognize the global scale of timber marketing and investment.
- Rename the fifth issue category “Protected Areas”
 - Add the issue of impacts to a broad range of social-cultural values related to non-timber resources, recreation, and aesthetics, among others.
 - Change the issue statement to “loss of ecosystem services”.
 - Add the issue of protected area network viability in promoting ecological connectivity.
- Consider adding a separate issue category of resource land watershed management, distinct from the issues in the water PAWG, and including issues such as impact on water flow regimes, soil moisture, soil movement and in-water and riparian habitat.
- Consider dropping “Temporal and Spatial Scale as a distinct issue category, since scale is an important factor in all other issue categories, or include scale issues in the “Unknowns” category.
- In “Unknowns,”
 - Add variability in climate pattern and in disturbance mechanisms (including wind)
 - Add uncertainty about the positive or negative consequences of changes to species distribution.

3. Needed Documentation of Science Basis for Issues and Strategies

- Distinguishing causation is problematic, including climate-induced causation, other environmental causation and direct human causation. If the latter can be distinguished, adaptive management responses may be more easily identified.
- The clearest focus can be on effects happening now rather than on conjectured future effects. Reference to existing literature documenting these current effects would be useful.
- The PAWG focus should be on what to do about those effects and trends which are becoming apparent now.

4. Initial Issue Prioritization

- First priority are issues relating to forest health, pests and pathogens, and fire severity and extent, and relations among them, as well as data and cost issues. (10 votes, including 7 first choice votes)
- Second priority are species physiological, ecological, and distribution effects, including genetics issues, both as drivers of disturbance effects and as driven by disturbance effects. (5 votes, including 1 first choice vote)
- Third priority are timber management issues, including industry economic viability, availability of processing infrastructure, and management guidelines. (3 votes, including 1 first choice vote)
- Fourth priority are habitat and protected area issues. (2 votes, including 1 first choice vote)
- Also mentioned were critical unknowns, and flexibility of regulatory and institutional structure.

5. Desired Future Condition

- There was general agreement that future ecosystem services (diversity, quality, quantity, and cost) is a more useful concept in formulating goals than a static concept of “desired future conditions,” especially if the latter is based on historical conditions. Change is assured.
- It’s important to articulate clear goals, some of which might be general across land ownership categories and some of which will vary by ownership category.
- Trying to prevent catastrophic events was mentioned as a goal, as well as resilience following such events.

6. Response Strategies and Prioritization Criteria

- Not discussed due to time limitations

Next steps and agreements:

1. Craig will send current meeting materials to members who didn't receive them.
2. Craig will circulate a summary of this meeting, including posting on Ecology's Climate Change website.
3. Craig will circulate a revised issues list including proposed priorities.
4. Craig will share with group members any relevant information of the next PAWG leads meeting.
5. Group members will consider the strategies discussed so far and other potential strategies related to our issues, including strategy prioritization criteria, in preparation for the next meeting.
6. Members may continue to circulate relevant information, and check the "Additional Documents" list at our group's website at www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/cat_pawg_fr.htm

Next meeting:

The next Forestry PAWG meeting is set for September 11, 10:00 to 12:00. The main topic of this meeting will be response strategies, including research needs, and criteria for strategy prioritization. In addition, desired future functions and needed reference to supporting science can be further discussed as needed. Finally, agreements will be sought for member work, prior to the October meeting, to flesh out strategy detail and consider strategy prioritization.