

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup of the**  
**Advisory Committee on Water Information**  
**March 26, 2015: 1:00 – 2:30**

**Call in Numbers:**

USGS staff at Headquarters - x4848  
Other USGS offices/DOI locations - 703-648-4848  
Non-USGS locations (toll free) - 1-855-547-8255  
The access code is: 53700#

When it is time to attend the meeting, please visit this link:

<https://usgs.webex.com/usgs/j.php?MTID=m3c32323580d4f5435f2c860b2c2e6a30>

**Attendees:**

Jeff Peterson, Co-chair, EPA	Sara Larsen, WSWC	Ben Chou, NRDC
Paul Freedman, Co-chair, WEF	Mary Musick, GWPC	Deirdre Mason, ASDWA
Brandon Kernen, ASDWA	Sascha Petersen, ASAP	Rhonda Montgomery, FEMA
Jeff Manning, ACWA	Dave Carlton, ASFPM	Hannah Safford, OSTP
Mike Block, NGWA	Jonathan Kaledin, USWA	Karen Metchis, EPA
Patrick McCarthy, TNC	Noel Gollehon, NRCS	Wendy Norton, USGS
Nancy Turyk, NALMS		

**Speakers:**

Ellen Tarquinio, CEQ  
David Stearrett, FEMA

**Action Items:**

- **ACTION:** Jeff and Paul will take another look at the WRACCW recommendations contained in our comments on draft *Interagency Workgroup 2014 Highlights and 2015 Workplan for the National Action Plan*, and will determine the best places to insert additional examples and background information; they will circulate the result of this work to the rest of the workgroup via email. Everyone else should send Jeff and Paul any edits that need to be made to this document, for the sake of clarity.

**I) Introductions and Agenda Review**

Jeff Peterson took the roll and started the meeting with a preview of the agenda.

**II) Approval of Notes from Previous Meeting** (see draft notes at [http://acwi.gov/climate\\_wkg/index.html](http://acwi.gov/climate_wkg/index.html))

**III) Presentation: Water Elements of New Executive Order on Sustainability;** Ellen Tarquinio, Deputy Associate Director for Water, Council on Environmental Quality

- Executive Order: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/19/executive-order-planning-federal-sustainability-next-decade>

- Fact Sheet: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/19/fact-sheet-reducing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-federal-government-and-acro>
- Some workgroups will be set up to help implement the goals of the Executive Order, focusing on specific targets mentioned in the Order.
- The Order includes language in Section 10 about cooperation among Feds and with States and regional organizations; one of the topical areas to be addressed through cooperative efforts is “climate change preparedness and resilience planning.”
- *Question:* Green infrastructure is mostly in cities; is there any coordination with city governments on this issue? *Answer:* Yes, green infrastructure is a prime stormwater management tool, and the reason green infrastructure shows up in this document is that it’s already a priority for numerous municipalities, and coordination (and expertise transfer) will be a huge component of the implementation process. *Question:* Do you expect there will be a specific mandate and/or specific funding for green infrastructure? *Answer:* I would not expect a specific mandate (or new funding) to result from this Order.
- Strongly encourage all WRACCW participants to read the Order and the accompanying fact sheet (see URLs above).

**IV) Presentation: New Federal Flood Risk Management Standard;** David Stearrett, Federal Emergency Management Agency (see: <https://www.fema.gov/federal-flood-risk-management-standard-ffrms>)

- EO 13690: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/30/executive-order-establishing-federal-flood-risk-management-standard-and->
- Flood Risk Management Standard: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/101759>
- Draft Implementing Guidelines: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/101761> (comment period closed April 6)
- Slides from this presentation are available here [http://acwi.gov/climate\\_wkg/minutes/26\\_mar\\_2015/02\\_ffrms\\_briefing\\_march\\_2015.pdf](http://acwi.gov/climate_wkg/minutes/26_mar_2015/02_ffrms_briefing_march_2015.pdf)
- *Question:* Regarding the 30-day period after the end of the comment period, at the end of which agencies have to have a draft implementation plan ... when does that clock start? *Answer:* The clock starts when the comment period ends.
- *Question:* There’s a slightly different standard for critical facilities, compared to other facilities. Are there facilities in the water resources area that fall into the definition of “critical” or is “critical” limited to hospitals, police stations, etc.? *Answer:* The discussion of critical facilities changed slightly as the guidelines were updated; they now include a little discussion/definition of what constitutes a critical facility. But the definition is still fairly open for interpretation by individual Federal agencies. Sewage treatment plans might be categorized as critical, for example, but it’s not a hard mandate.
- If wastewater and drinking water facilities are determined to be critical, then the 3-foot protection standard or the elevation standard might apply (see slide 10).
- *Question:* Is there a fact sheet or other resource we can distribute to help agencies understand the options available to them, or should we just point people back to the press release? *Answer:* FEMA has received a number of requests for outreach materials, and some of the materials (including FAQs) will be available soon on the FEMA website.

**V) Workgroup Business Items**

- Workgroup comments on draft Interagency Workgroup *2014 Highlights and 2015 Workplan* for the *National Action Plan* (see draft comments attached)
- We’re halfway through 2015, and we should keep that in mind as we look at the 2015 actions laid out in the Plan.

- Would it be useful to include some specific examples of how recommendations would be implemented? For instance, in the IWRM area, WaterSMART could be strengthened by collaborating with USDA through the Regional Partnership Program. This could be outlined as part of the recommendations, for the sake of clarity. **ACTION:** Jeff and Paul will take another look at the recommendations and determine the best places to insert additional examples and background information; they will circulate the result of this work to the rest of the workgroup via email. Everyone else should send Jeff and Paul any edits that need to be made, for the sake of clarity.
- *Question:* Why is the funding recommendation 7<sup>th</sup> on the list? Does it even belong on the list, or is it a different type of recommendation altogether? *Answer:* We can list the recommendations in any order the workgroup is comfortable with.
- Recommendation 7 could be re-titled “Encouraging Interagency Cooperation” or could be removed from the numbered list and shown separately, since it differs from the other recommendations.
- Workgroup comments on draft NEPA *GHG and Climate Change Guidance* (see attached comments).
- We requested comments on this document at our last meeting but didn’t receive any feedback. Is the group comfortable with sending this forward now, given that we’re technically 1 day behind schedule in sending this on to CEQ?
- On page 2, under #4, there’s usually a 50-year timeframe rather than the 20-year timeframe shown here. Can we clarify this? Yes, we can clarify that the time period is different from various types of projects, or we can use a range of years (that would cover various types of projects).
- We will make these small adjustments and then send the comments on to CEQ.
- Update of ACWI Website Revision for Climate Workgroup
- Update Workgroup Membership
- There is a new membership list on the website, since we’ve had some turnover.
- We are considering possible changes in representation, since some groups’ reps have not attended any WRACCW meetings in a while. If you have a new rep to suggest, please contact the co-chairs.

## **VI) Round Robin Reports from Workgroup Members (a brief highlight of your organization’s activities related to climate change and water)**

- *Climate Change Adaptation by Federal Agencies: An Analysis of Plans and Issues for Congress;* <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43915.pdf>
- RISE US Launch March 2: <http://www.preventionweb.net/rise/>
- Wildlife Conservation Society: \$2 million Climate Adaptation Fund (applications due April 10); <http://www.wcsnorthamerica.org/ClimateAdaptationFund/tabid/4813/Default.aspx>
- Conference: Climate Science to Engineering Operations for Watershed Management: A CCAWWG Workshop for Scientists, Engineers, and Water Resource Managers
  - WHEN: 25-27 August 2015
  - WHERE: University of Washington, Fisheries Science Building, Seattle, WA
- National Adaptation Conference Registration; May 12-14; St. Louis , Mo.: <http://nationaladaptationforum.org/>
- AWRA Climate Change Adaptation Specialty Conference: <http://awra.org/meetings/NewOrleans2015/>; Registration link: <http://awra.org/meetings/NewOrleans2015/registration.html>
- Research Brief: *California Drought and Climate Change Linked – but Rain Isn’t the Only Factor;* <https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/files/PNAS-Diffenbaugh-Drought-Climate-Brief-03032015-FINAL.pdf>

- *FUNDING WATER in Times of Financial Uncertainty: The Case for a Public Goods Charge in California*; <http://waterinthewest.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Ajami-PGC-WhitePaper-FINAL02172015.pdf>
- WSWC is looking to re-adopt its resolution on Federal research on climate adaptation. The new version of the resolution will be a little more general than the previous one, which was aimed at specific actions/products. This will be discussed during the WSWC April 17 meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

## VIII) Adjourn

**No meeting in April. Next meeting will be in May, with the exact date TBA.**