

The National Climate Assessment: *The Third National Climate Assessment Report*

What is the National Climate Assessment (NCA)?



The NCA is an important resource for understanding and communicating climate change science and impacts in the United States. It informs the nation about already observed changes, the current status of the climate, and anticipated trends for the future.

The NCA will present a comprehensive picture of the changes in regions and sectors that occur in response to climate variability and change, including effects on public health and human well-being, the economy, infrastructure, and the environment.

The information in the NCA will help decision makers throughout the country design adaptation policies, help citizens prepare themselves for climate change impacts, and help everyone understand how their everyday decisions impact the climate and the environment.

What are the objectives of the NCA?

The NCA is envisioned as an inclusive, nationwide process with many key objectives, including:

- Evaluating, integrating, and assessing relevant climate science and information from multiple sources
- Summarizing and synthesizing the findings of the U.S. Global Change Research Program
- Increasing understanding of what is known and not known about climate change
- Informing climate science research priorities
- Building climate assessment capacity, including vulnerability assessment and documentation of impacts in regions and sectors
- Supporting climate-literacy and skilled use of NCA findings

What topics are covered in the Third NCA Report?

The Third NCA Report documents how climate change impacts regions (depicted on the map below) and sectors across the United States and society's responses to climate change.



- Our changing climate
- Water resources
- Energy supply and use
- Transportation
- Agriculture
- Forests
- Ecosystems and biodiversity
- Human health
- Water, energy and land use
- Urban
- Indigenous peoples, lands, and resources
- Land use and land cover change
- Rural communities
- Biogeochemical cycles
- Oceans
- Coastal zone
- Decision support
- Mitigation
- Adaptation
- Research needs
- Sustained assessment

Read the current draft version of the NCA
<http://ncadac.globalchange.gov>

What is new about the Third NCA?

The NCA process and third report set the stage for more comprehensive assessments in the future. It differs from previous U.S. climate assessments in a variety of ways:

- It is a sustained process, rather than a periodic report-writing activity. Regional and sectoral activities are expected to be ongoing, and reports will be produced on a more frequent basis.
- The NCA includes climate impacts and projections and assesses progress in response activities such as adaptation, mitigation and decision making.
- Partnerships inside and outside of the government support this effort, including entities in both the public and the private sectors. (NCAnet: <http://ncanet.usgcrp.gov/>)
- National indicators of change within regions and sectors are being developed, along with consistent and ongoing methods for evaluation. (Indicators: <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment/indicators-system>)
- This NCA report will be submitted as an interactive PDF and the entire report (including access to underlying data and resources) will be available via globalchange.gov; this allows easier access to data for citizens and scientists and transparent “line of sight” between data and conclusions.

Who is responsible for the NCA?

The Global Change Research Act of 1990 requires an assessment report at least every four years. The Federal government is responsible for producing these reports through the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), a collaboration of 13 Federal science agencies. A 60 member Federal advisory committee, the National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee (NCADAC), has been charged with developing the Third NCA Report and recommendations about the ongoing assessment process. The report itself is being written by 240 authors drawn from academia; local, state, tribal, and Federal governments; and the private and nonprofit sectors.



What are the Next Steps for the NCA?

Spring 2014: The government expects to release a final version of the Third NCA Report.

Ongoing: Sustained assessment process activities are already underway. These activities include:

- Release of NCADAC Special Report on Sustained Assessment (<http://1.usa.gov/1hjFEda>)
- Launch of an interagency special report on the impacts of climate change on human health in the US; public comment period March 2014 (<http://1.usa.gov/1dghKyR>)
- Planning for evaluation of the NCA3 process

The National Climate Assessment is an activity of the United States Global Climate Research Program, whose vision is to create “A nation, globally engaged and guided by science, meeting the challenges of climate and global change.”