



First Friday All Climate Change Talks (FFACCTs)

Hosted by the USDA Forest Service

Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center

June 3, 2016, 11:00 a.m. (ET)



FFACCTs Highlights – Opening remarks by Steve McNulty, Director, USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub (SERCH)

Washington Office (WO) Update

Karen Dante, Climate Change Adaptation and Policy Specialist, Office of Sustainability and Climate Change (OSCC)

- Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack [recently released a roadmap for the USDA Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry](#) to help farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners respond to climate change through voluntary, incentive-based conservation, forestry, and energy programs. The roadmap outlines progress, implementation plans, and [case studies](#).
- With help of Research and Development staff, the Office of Sustainability and Climate Change will soon be releasing regional assessments on the impact of disturbances such as fire, insects, and disease on forest carbon stocks of each national forest and grassland.

USDA Climate Hubs Update

Steve McNulty, Director, USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub (SERCH)

- Seven Climate Hub projects have been selected for FY 2016 funding, including: “A tool for improving climate change risk management strategies for managers of federally owned lands” (Principal Investigator [PI]: Paulette Ford, Rocky Mountain Research Station [RMRS]); “Online toolkit to help resource managers plan for and mitigate post-fire flood impacts” (PI: Megan Friggens, RMRS); “A climate change assessment of vegetation, fire, and ecosystem services for tribal lands in the Pacific Northwest” (PI: Jim Kim, Pacific Northwest Research Station [PNW]); “As if you were there: The development of a virtual network of demonstration sites featuring climate-informed practices in natural resource management, agroforestry and urban forestry” (PI: Erin Lane, Northern Research Station [NRS]); “Targeting landscape locations to reduce air temperatures with forests and climate change risks to forests” (PI: David Nowak, NRS); “Developing best management practices for climate change adaptation” (PI: David Peterson, PNW); and “Guidance for federal land managers to incorporate local traditional phenological knowledge into climate-related disturbance restoration” (PI: Alan Watson, RMRS).

Climate Science Center Updates

Alex Bryan, Climate Scientist / Postdoctoral Fellow, Northeast Climate Science Center (NE CSC)

- The NE CSC’s [2015 Annual Report](#) is now available and highlights accomplishments from the NE CSC and partners.
- Two forest-focused projects were recently completed, including NRS Scientist/NE CSC PI Frank Thompson’s [modeling of changes in forested landscapes in the northeastern U.S.](#) and University of Vermont Professor/NE CSC PI Tony D’Amato’s [modeling of the effects of climate change on spruce-fir ecosystems](#).
- Alex attended a workshop with Colonial National Historical Park in Jamestown, VA, to help with climate change vulnerability assessment (sea level rise, historical structures, etc.). He was also involved in a similar process with Acadia National Park in Maine.
- NE CSC Research Ecologist Toni Lyn Morelli is helping conduct the first state-wide, species-focused vulnerability assessment of Massachusetts.

Jerry McMahan, Director, Southeast Climate Science Center (SE CSC)

- Jerry and staff from SERCH recently attended a Coastal Carolinas drought workshop. The SE CSC will host a workshop on ecological drought in November.
- The SE CSC is developing a 5-year strategic science plan, which may be coordinated with SERCH.
- A recent meeting addressed a research agenda for urban ecosystems, including the effects of warming on insects and tree health.

Station Updates

Steve McNulty, Director, USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub (SERCH)

- An [article recently published in Nature Scientific Reports](#) describes how [more productive national forests and grasslands could yield less water in a future climate](#). Priorities and tradeoffs must be considered with regard to carbon sequestration and water supplies.



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Emrys Treasure, Coordinator, USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub (SERCH)

- Agreements are in place to support expansion of the Fire Weather Portal & Alerts (North Carolina State University and the State Climate Office of North Carolina), the Forest Health portal (University of Georgia/Southern Regional Extension Forestry), and the AgroClimate project (University of Florida), and to support a new project to demonstrate how cover crops and healthy soils can improve climate variability resiliency (University of Tennessee).
- Representatives from local governments in the SERCH region will join a committee to help connect needs and activities, among other opportunities for collaboration and feedback from extension networks.
- The [Coastal Carolinas Drought Early Warning System](#) will increase drought preparedness and resilience in the region, and will leverage a number of partner contributions, including SERCH-led or -funded projects such as the Fire Weather Portal and SERCH LIGHTS.
- SERCH LIGHTS was recently featured in a [USDA blog post](#). [Subscribe to SERCH LIGHTS](#) to receive the Monthly Drought Outlook alert.

Christopher Woodall, Research Forester, Northern Research Station (NRS)

- USDA will be the lead organizer for an international boreal forest biannual meeting to be held in Bangor, ME, in June 2017. The meeting will be of interest to those addressing carbon and climate change issues in high latitude forest ecosystems. Monitoring techniques using LiDAR, Landsat, etc. will also be a focus of the meeting.
- NRS Program Manager Rich Birdsey will retire July 2.

Bill Gould, Research Ecologist, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF), and Director, USDA Caribbean Climate Hub

- The Forest Service organized and hosted many activities around USDA Secretary Vilsack's recent visit to Puerto Rico. The Secretary participated in roundtable discussions with leaders in agriculture and economics at IITF. During a press conference, he connected the issues of food security, climate change, and national security, and [announced new support for school lunch programs and rural development](#).

National Forest System Updates

Leslie Brandt, Climate Change Specialist (Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science [NIACS]), Eastern Region

- NIACS and the Northern Forests Climate Hub were featured in the USDA blog's special series on climate change last month, including posts on the [Hub's climate change workshop for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#), [adaptation resources for agriculture](#), and a [Department of Defense partnership](#).
- NRS Research Ecologist Chris Swanston will present at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center practitioners forum. Kristen Schmitt at NIACS developed a video about work with Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge to incorporate climate change considerations into their Habitat Management Plan.
- Next week, the Eastern Region/Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters planners meeting will take place in Rolla, MO. Leslie and several other NRS scientists will give presentations on climate change and planning/monitoring.
- NIACS is seeking a web developer for the USDA Climate Hubs and Climate Change Resource Center. This position has the option of working remotely. [Please share this opportunity](#) with anyone who may be interested.

Emrys Treasure, Coordinator, USDA Southeast Regional Climate Hub (recently served as Ecosystems Management Coordinator [detail], Southern Region)

- The Francis Marion National Forest [released its draft plan and Environmental Impact Statement](#), which includes direction to address climate change and sea level rise through a monitoring-driven adaptive management framework. The Francis Marion is likely to be the first national forest to complete a revised forest plan under the new Planning Rule. Similar work is also underway on the El Yunque and Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests and National Forests in Texas.
- National forest monitoring programs have transitioned to the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule, which requires monitoring of measurable changes related to climate change and other stressors. The Southern Region has developed a [broader-scale monitoring strategy](#) that is relevant to more than a single plan area.



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Presentation

["Women Woodland Owners & Forest Resiliency Education"](#) — Tamara Walkingstick, Associate Professor of Extension Forestry, University of Arkansas, and Associate Director, Arkansas Forest Resources Center

The next FFACCTs will take place August 5.

Please send comments, feedback, and presentation suggestions to Stephanie Worley Firley, Eastern Threat Center, (sworleyfirley@fs.fed.us) and visit the [FFACCTs webpage](#) for additional information.