

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

Grand Challenges and Next Initiatives Offsite

20 July 2006, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., New Executive Office Building, Room 5213

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

Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair
David Applegate (USGS), Vice-Chair for Science
Margaret Davidson (NOAA), Interim Vice-Chair for Policy

NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

Working Group Chairs

International Working Group

Ralph Braibanti (State), Chair

Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair

Tim Batista (NOAA), Co-Chair

Designated Representatives

BLM *Ed Shepard*

John R. Haugh

CDC Dan Sosin

DHS/FEMA *David Maurstad*

DHS/USCG *Suzanne Strohl*

DOE *Patricia Hoffman*

DOI James Tate, Jr. (T)

DOT K. T. Thirumalai

EOP / OSTP Gene Whitney

EPA *Peter Jutro*

Stephen Clark

HUD *David Engel*

NASA Steve Ambrose

NGA *Robert Lohman*

NGB *Bill Ryan*

Clay McGuyer

NIH Allen Dearry (T)

NIST *Jim St. Pierre*

Noel Raufaste

NOAA Helen Wood

Margaret Davidson

NSF Joy Pauschke

OPHS Sven Rodenbeck

State *Ralph Braibanti*

USACE *Barbara J. Sotirin*

USAID *Peter Morris*

USDA *Allen Dedrick*

USDA / USFS Susan Conard

USGS David Applegate

Other Attendees

DHS/FEMA: John Gambel

NOAA Nell Codner

Jim McGuire

Nathalie Vallette-Silver

NSF Robert O'Connor

Secretariat Will Hottel

Dori Stiefel

Emily Wallace

State: Amy McKee

Agenda

- 8:30 Welcome and Introductions
- 8:35 Approval of June Meeting Minutes
- 8:40 Opening Remarks
- 8:50 Introduction of Offsite Objectives and Expectations
- 9:05 What's Next for the Grand Challenges?
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 What's Next for the Grand Challenges? (continued)
- 11:00 How Can We Leverage and Encourage Technology Development/The Evolving Role of the SDR
- 12:00 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- June Meeting Minutes
- Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Overview
- SDR Accomplishments and Opportunities
- Executive Order: Public Alert and Warning System

I. Welcome and Introductions

SDR Chair Helen Wood called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Approval of June Meeting Minutes

Members approved the June meeting minutes.

III. Opening Remarks

SDR Chair Helen Wood began by welcoming the members and effusively thanked Dr. Whitney for meeting space at the New Executive Office Building. SDR members were reminded that the Secretariat is maintaining a secured list of member social security numbers and dates of birth to facilitate building entry.

Ms. Wood then discussed the critical role the SDR Secretariat plays in facilitating all SDR publications and coordinating meeting and events. There are only 2-3 weeks left for members to make financial contributions for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 task order. She called upon members to make contributions to continue funding the SDR Secretariat in the coming fiscal year. Dr. Applegate reiterated that request and added that any additional agency contributions would be welcome.

Dr. Susan Conard requested the Secretariat Support Letter for FY07 be circulated soon so agency representatives can make requests to their bosses early in the fiscal year. Dr. Gene Whitney reminded the members that agencies must fund SDR work and document production because the NSTC is a "virtual" agency and cannot provide funding.

Ms. Wood invited SDR Vice-Chair David Applegate to discuss the recent Natural Hazards Conference in Boulder, Colorado. At this event Dr. Applegate moderated a plenary session on the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction, which included a variety of experts including current and former members of the SDR, as well as distinguished invited guests from academia, industry and the non-profit sector. The Secretariat will make slides from the plenary session available on the SDR members only website.

Dr. Gene Whitney reminded the members of the NSTC's mission, which is to help member agencies move beyond their agency missions to work on broad national goals. The SDR is creating a set of priorities that, when addressed, will reduce the impact of disasters. These priorities are targets for the agencies and OMB to meet and implement in the budget process.

IV. What's next for The Grand Challenges?

Dr. Applegate announced that the Grand Challenges implementation plans have been cleared by the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and passed along to the White House for final approval. The next step will be to determine subject, scope, team leaders and team members for a series of Grand Challenges cross-cutting white papers. Possible topics include:

A. Early Warning

Dr. Whitney led a discussion of early warnings for disaster reduction. He drew attention to the *Executive Order: Public Alert and Warning Systems* contained in the meeting packets. It is a significant step that grew out of the Task Force on Effective Warnings work last summer.

Dr. Bob O'Connor reported that the National Science Foundation (NSF) would likely issue a solicitation this fall for basic science research on how people hear or receive warning content and what they do with the information. Captain Sven Rodenbeck reminded the members that there is a

large body of knowledge already available on alerts and warnings, especially related to technological disasters (e.g., chemical spills) that can be referenced.

Ms. Wood pointed out that the SDR paper entitled *Effective Disaster Warnings (2000)* has been cited numerous times in reference to this new Executive Order, but that paper is somewhat dated and obscure. Dr. Applegate suggested that the SDR send a letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security drawing attention to the 2000 document and reiterating the importance of the social sciences in any public alert and warning system. It would be useful for the SDR to produce a new, high level paper on early warnings as part of next year's work plan. The Secretariat will take a first pass at drafting the letter based on the *Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction, Tsunami Risk Reduction for the United States: A Framework for Action* and *Effective Disaster Warnings (2000)*. Members who are interested in contributing should contact the Secretariat. The letter will be sent in August and a longer white paper may be developed in the next 90 days.

B. Community Resilience

SDR Interim Vice-Chair for Policy Margaret Davidson opened the discussion on community resilience saying resilience is about building the capacity to bounce back. Rather than reacting exclusively to easily identified vulnerabilities, the concept of resilience emphasizes local strengths and capabilities.

Ms. Davidson talked about the recent letter to the insurance industry from Lloyds of London, which says that climate and weather statistics and distributed risk must become a major focus for all insurers. The letter states "We believe that is time for the insurance industry to take a more leading role in understanding and managing the impact of climate change. The insurance industry must now seize the opportunity to make a difference, not just to the future of our own industry, but to the future of society." The full text is available online at:

<http://www.lloyds.com/NR/rdonlyres/38782611-5ED3-4FDC-85A4-5DEAA88A2DA0/0/FINAL360climatechangereport.pdf>

Developing a Community Resilience Index was discussed. Ms. Wood noted that the International Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction issued guidelines for resilience in May, which may provide a useful framework. Those guidelines are available online at:

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/docs/Hyogo-framework-for-action-english.pdf>

Dr. Conard cautioned the members that resilience must encompass all stages of a hazards event (before, during and after). Mr. John Gambel encouraged members to consider the societal shift to coast and how that has increased hazard vulnerability and resilience. Dr. Dan Sosin encouraged the inclusion of a community's psychological recovery in any measure of resilience. Captain Rodenbeck questioned how sustainability fits in.

In addition to developing a white paper on the topic, Ms. Davidson would like to see the SDR co-sponsor an event with the Congressional Hazards Caucus, and perhaps a session at the AMS Symposium in January, 2007. Ms. Davidson mentioned a Disasters Roundtable event on Coastal Vulnerability to be held in March, 2007 could be a good foundation for building an event at the American Geophysical Union fall meeting in December, 2007. She requested the Secretariat circulate the recent Disasters Roundtable Steering Committee meeting report to the full SDR.

C. Earth Observations

Dr. Steve Ambrose led the discussion on Earth observations. The Earth Observations Working Group has continued to monitor the activities of, and work in coordination with U.S. Group on Earth Observations. The paper on Near Term Opportunity (NTO) for Disasters being published by USGEO will have excellent visibility and draw much needed attention to the issue of Earth observations for disaster reduction. The NTO report will provide excellent background for a white paper on the deployment and use of Earth observations. Simply developing the tools for Earth observations is not enough if they are not distributed and used properly. Building on international efforts and previous work of the SDR, the goal is to publish the white paper in the next 3 months.

The tables of Earth observations capabilities by agency, created by Dr. Rosalind Helz, will provide excellent background for this effort. The Secretariat will work to make those tables available on the SDR website.

Dr. Ambrose mentioned a recent publication from the United Nations on disaster reduction entitled *Know Risk*. Members can request copies of the book from the Secretariat. It can also be requested online by sending an email to: unpubli@unog.ch.

D. Critical Infrastructure

Dr. Joy Pausche led a discussion on critical infrastructure. Any effort to develop an SDR whitepaper on protection critical infrastructure should build upon the *National Infrastructure Plan* developed by the Department of Homeland Security. There is an existing Subcommittee on Infrastructure that reports to both the NSTC Committee on Technology and the Committee on Homeland and National Security. The SDR will engage with this subcommittee and seek to give a briefing on this new activity at their next meeting.

Major issues that must be addressed when developing the infrastructure white paper include transfer of science and technology knowledge to operational planning and the economic buy-in of state and local governments.

E. Other Topics

Dr. Conard mentioned the impacts of hazards on natural resources including agricultural resources, water and air as a possible topic of interest for a white paper. Dr. Conard and Dr. Nathalie Vallette Silver both expressed interest in developing this topic, possibly with support from the Bureau of Land Management, The Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Dr. Dan Sosin suggested the science of disaster response and how it impacts both hazard events and recovery as a topic. Certainly communications in a hazard event might be of national and interagency interest.

The development of community “report cards” for disaster resilience continued to interest the subcommittee. The Heinz Center Ecosystem Report Card (undertaken at behest of OSTP) could serve as a model.

NSF commented on the lack of Space Weather Grand Challenges Implementation Plan when they provided comments at the CENR level during clearance of the Grand Challenges Four-Page Implementation Plans. Ms. Wood pointed out that space weather can have potentially large economic and health consequences, and might be a useful topic for an SDR Grand Challenges four-page implementation plan. She will follow up with Sam Williamson of the Space Weather Policy

Council to discuss the best way to engage. Additional information on the Space Weather Policy Council is available online at <http://www.ofcm.gov/nswp-sp/text/nswpc.htm>.

V. Technology Development/The Evolving Role of the SDR

Dr. Applegate asked if there is an opportunity for the SDR to identify specific observing systems, modeling systems and other big ticket items that are nearly ready to make a drastic difference in the way individuals experience disasters. Specifically, which of those offer the biggest bang for investment dollars? Also, could this be an opportunity for the SDR to highlight agency initiatives/investments that are reducing the cost of technology and making it more readily available? The members decided that it may be useful for the SDR to develop a cross-cut of disaster related technologies across agencies and Dr. Whitney called for an inventory of disaster related technologies, identifying what is there to be used and where developments are ready to break through.

In discussing the evolving role of the SDR, it was mentioned that Senate report language on the DHS National Centers for Excellence program could spell the end of the program, which could cripple basic research and development. (See: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_reports&docid=f:hr476.109.pdf)

Dr. Conard asked about the President's National Competitiveness Initiative for Science (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/aci/index.html>) and why disaster reduction has not been singled out as a major area for advancement. How can the SDR work to increase awareness of this issue and make it a national priority? Dr. Whitney responded that it is incumbent upon the SDR to focus on areas where the Nation is on the precipice of major change, a true shift in the way individuals experience disasters and raise that at every opportunity with the White House, with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and within the agencies.

Dr. Applegate mentioned that the SDR is continuing to work on an OMB Grand Challenges Tool, which maps how Program Assessment Rating Tool measures apply to the Grand Challenges Implementation Plans. The Secretariat will present a preliminary version of this tool for member input prior to the September SDR meeting.

A distribution plan for the exist Grand Challenges four-page implementation plans was discussed. Ms. Davidson suggested the SDR work with the Congressional Hazards Caucus to arrange a series of congressional briefings on the documents.

Dr. Whitney asked if the social sciences were being adequately covered in the white papers discussed. He asked the Subcommittee if an additional crosscut should be developed on strategies for addressing the social sciences for disaster reduction. It might be more useful to simply develop a strategy for better incorporating social sciences into the existing reports, which the representatives from NSF will champion.

Wrapping up the meeting, Dr. Noel Raufaste requested members critique the meeting minutes and be ready to prioritize the items mentioned today and develop a timetable at the September meeting.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m. EDT.

VI. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET in the

New Executive Office Building (contact the Secretariat to facilitate building entry):

September 14, 2006
October 5, 2006

November 2, 2006
December 7, 2006

VII. 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 Emily Wallace (ewallace@grs-solutions.com).

VIII. Contact Information SDR Leadership

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International Working Group

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Earth Observations Working Group

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-0851, sambrose@nasa.gov

Tim Battista, Co-Chair, 301-713-3028 x171, tim.battista@noaa.gov

Grand Challenges Task Group

Noel Raufaste, Chair, 301-975-6062, noel.raufaste@nist.gov

Secretariat

Emily Wallace, 703-560-7448, ewallace@grs-solutions.com

IV. Summary of June Actions

Action	Lead	By When
Provide text of the Senate report on the DHS Appropriations for National Centers for Excellence to the members	Secretariat	Complete
Update the Secretariat Support Letter and send to the SDR Leadership	Secretariat	28 July 2006
Follow up with Sam Williamson of the Space Weather Policy Council.	Helen Wood	28 July 2006
Contact the Secretariat (ewallace@grs-solutions.com) if you are interested in participating in the following Working Groups: Warnings, Community Resilience, Critical Infrastructure, Earth Observations, and Resource Impacts	SDR Members	28 July 2006
Post slides from the Grand Challenges Plenary Session at the National Hazards Conference in Boulder to the SDR Website	Secretariat	28 July 2006
Distribute the full report of the NAS Disasters Roundtable on Coastal Hazards	Secretariat	28 July 2006

to all members		
Draft warning letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security	Secretariat	11 August
Post Technical Reference Document and tables compiled by Roz Helz to the SDR Website	Secretariat	18 August 2006