Climate Adaptation at the Federal Level and Beyond

George Gay
Wildlife Conservation Programs

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey
November 29, 2011
Federal Climate Adaptation

• Comprehensive climate legislation
  – Passed the House in June ‘09 (ACES)
  – Died in Senate in August ‘10

• Had key adaptation provisions
  – National adaptation strategy
  – State and agency-specific adaptation plans
  – Significant natural resource adaptation funding

• Attacks underway on EPA’s Clean Air Act authority to regulate carbon

Photo: Phil Romans
New Adaptation Legislation

- November 16, 2011
- Safeguarding America’s Future and Environment (SAFE) Act
- Requires natural resources adaptation planning by federal and state governments
- Co-sponsored by Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
Key Federal Agencies for Adaptation

• Council on Environmental Quality
• Office of Science and Technology Policy
• Department of Interior
  – Fish & Wildlife Service
  – US Geological Survey
• US Forest Service
• NOAA
• Environmental Protection Agency
Council on Environmental Quality

- White House “environment” office
- Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force
  - Convened based on executive order
  - 20 federal agencies
  - Federal Actions for a Climate Resilient Nation
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
  - Guidance on NEPA and climate change
Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

- White House “science” office
- National Climate Adaptation Summit
  - Held in March 2010
  - Report just released

“We only have three choices: adaptation, mitigation and suffering, and we are going to need a lot of the first two in order to avoid a lot of the third ... Anybody who thinks there are alternatives is smoking dope.”

-- John Holdren, President’s Science Advisor
Department of Interior Initiatives

- Secretarial Order on climate change (3289)
  - issued Sept. ‘09

- Key Provisions:
  - Energy and Climate Council established
  - Climate change planning requirements
  - Climate Science Centers
  - Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (Andrew)

- America’s Great Outdoors
  - Jointly chaired with Dept. of Agriculture
  - Report released November 3, 2011
  - In NJ features two Barnegat Bay priorities
US Fish & Wildlife Service

- USFWS Climate Change Strategy
  - September, 2010
- National Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Adaptation Strategy
  - Due May, 2012
- Landscape Conservation Cooperatives
US Geological Survey

• National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center
  – Established through appropriations process
  – Providing funding for research on priority climate change research needs
  – Focus on ecological response models rather than climate models

• Providing initial support and staffing for DOI Regional Climate Science Centers
DOI Regional Climate Science Centers

- 8 Climate Science Centers planned
  - Alaska, Pacific NW, Southeast in process

- Types of information envisioned
  - Downscaled climate information
  - Response modeling and forecasting
  - Vulnerability assessments
  - Response scenarios
US Forest Service

• Strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change (2008)
• National Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change (2010)
• Climate Change Resource Center website

http://www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/
Environmental Protection Agency

- Most EPA climate work is focused on mitigation rather than adaptation
  - With demise of climate bill, Clean Air Act authority will be primary vehicle for carbon regulation

- Climate-Ready Estuaries Program
NOAA

National Climate Service

- Programmatic framework to address climate change
- Coastal Climate Adaptation website
State-Based Work

Climate Action Plans

State Adaptation Plans

- 
  - Adaptation Plan in Progress or Completed
  - Adaptation Plan Recommended in C.A.P.*
Climate Action Plans/ Adaptation Plans

• 25 states updating Wildlife Action Plans

• 13 held workshops ~ CA, CT, FL, MA, ME, MI, MT, NH, NJ, NY, RI, TX, VA, VT, WA

• Northeast regional efforts
A Role Model for the Mid-Atlantic States

Comprehensive Strategy For Reducing Maryland’s Vulnerability to Climate Change

Phase II: Building societal, economic, and ecological resilience

January, 2011
Lucky Seven

- http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/
- http://www.cakex.org/
Thank You

George Gay

gayg@nwf.org