

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What was the origin of the Department of the Interior Climate Change Task Force?

**A:** Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne established the Department of the Interior (DOI) Climate Change Task Force to study the possible climate change impacts on water, lands, wildlife, parks, and other resources under DOI's stewardship as well as our responsibility to help moderate greenhouse gas emissions. Secretary Kempthorne asked Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett to chair the effort. A Steering Committee including the Assistant Secretaries, Bureau heads, and the Solicitor helped identify the broad climate change issues and priorities facing the Department. Three subcommittees, composed primarily of career professionals, were formed to undertake specific issue identification and draft proposed options to address the issues.

2. Who prepared the draft reports?

**A:** The reports were prepared by the three subcommittees: Land and Water, Law and Policy, and Science. The subcommittees were primarily made up of career professionals throughout DOI. Over 100 employees were involved in the development of the reports. Among the employees are land managers, scientists, engineers, economists, lawyers, and policy analysts.

3. Who reviewed the reports?

**A:** The reports were reviewed by senior level officials within DOI and the Executive Branch. They were not, however, submitted for review as official Administration policy. Rather, they were reviewed for clarity and informational purposes as work products of the DOI Climate Change Task Force subcommittees. The reports have not been edited by anyone outside of those subcommittees. The preamble and supporting text were prepared by the subcommittee chairs.

4. What topics do the 3 reports cover?

**A:** The Land and Water Subcommittee report identifies issues and challenges that may be facing the land, water, and natural resource managers at DOI as a consequence of predicted climate change. The Law and Policy Subcommittee report identifies legal and policy issues facing DOI. Both of these reports suggest options for addressing the issues and challenges they identify. The Science Subcommittee report identifies the science and information needed to assist DOI in addressing potential consequences of climate change and suggests options for developing, coordinating, acquiring, and analyzing any additional scientific information helpful for that purpose.

5. What sorts of options for addressing key issues do the reports identify?

**A:** The options range from suggesting organizational and procedural changes to ensure climate change is considered when land managers are developing management plans or constructing new facilities to large-scale restoration projects and invasive species control efforts. The options

were a result of brainstorming sessions by the Climate Change Task Force Subcommittee members and, as such, are not presented in any order of priority.

6. Are these options new initiatives for DOI?

A: Many of the options presented in the reports build on programs DOI is already pursuing in the context of good stewardship. These include enhancing our emergency preparedness, maintaining healthy forests, and developing methods for managing invasive species on DOI lands. The focus of the Climate Change Task Force is to establish a pro-active approach to the climate change impacts that are beginning to affect the land and water managed by DOI. The reports identify areas where future climate change may present new challenges and require new solutions.

7. Why didn't the Task Force subcommittees make specific recommendations?

A: Providing the DOI leadership with a wide range of options is the best way to make sure that alternatives can be incorporated into agency programs and that funds can be allocated and budgeted for those programs now and in future years. This approach provides the greatest flexibility as we see changes on the DOI landscape. In addition, these options are designed to stimulate discussion among DOI officials, other agency officials, and interested outside parties, including local communities, on how best to move forward in light of predicted climate change.

8. Do the options in these reports represent the position of the Administration or DOI?

A: No. These reports are Task Force reports to the Secretary of the Interior. The options have not been subject to the level or kind of review or priority setting that would occur if they were official Departmental or Administration positions. They are thoughtful descriptions of the challenges that lie ahead of us and our successors at DOI and present possible strategies for addressing those challenges.

9. Have any of the options presented in the reports been considered or incorporated into agency programs or budgets?

A: Though the subcommittee reports were not finalized at the time DOI formulated the 2009 budget, elements of the President's 2009 Budget for DOI did reflect the thinking of the Task Force. For example, the 2009 budget request included funding for a national climate effects science network, a major option presented by the Science Subcommittee. Most of the options will be used by bureau directors and office heads at DOI, as they set priorities in future budgets.

10. What does DOI plan to do with any comments it receives? Will the reports be revised?

A: DOI will review the comments and DOI land managers and policy makers will consider them along with the reports as they chart future land management policies and science goals. We will not revise the reports. They will stand as products of the Climate Change Task Force Subcommittees.

11. Since there will be a transition to another Administration in January 2009, how will these reports be useful in the future?

**A:** These reports represent the thinking of many career experts at DOI. The issues facing us today will be facing the next Administration as well. It is our hope that the reports and the public comments the Department may receive will help guide the next Secretary of the Interior and the next group of bureau and service heads as they determine how to manage our public lands in the face of a changing environment.

12. What immediate actions does DOI plan to take as a result of these reports in addition to making them publicly available and requesting comments?

**A:** The Secretary is establishing within DOI a senior political-level Climate Change Leadership Council to assure consideration of climate change issues at the highest levels of the Department. The Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance will support the Council, coordinate activities related to climate change. Each bureau and service will establish a Climate Change Liaison position to interact with that office.

We are also establishing a DOI-wide Climate Effects Science Network (CESN), involving all bureaus and services. The CESN will be coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey, with the goal of integrating science, monitoring, and modeling information. That effort will be used to improve effective resource management as well as legal and policy decision-making.

13. What actions have the Administration and DOI undertaken to date to address climate change issues?

**A:** Since its inception, this Administration has been actively involved in science related to climate change, as well as development of adaptation and mitigation measures. The websites listed below are just a sampling of activities throughout the Federal Government in this arena.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/clean-energy.html>

<http://www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/default.php>

<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/climate/>

[http://www.usgs.gov/global\\_change/](http://www.usgs.gov/global_change/)

<http://www.doe.gov/environment/climatechange.htm>

<http://climate.jpl.nasa.gov/>

<http://www.noaa.gov/climate.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basicinfo.html>