

Department of the Interior, Northwest Climate Science Center

Natural resource and agricultural production systems, wild lands, fresh and marine waters, and cultural resources in the Northwest are sensitive to changes or variability in climate. Climate directly affects wildfires, invasive species, bark beetle outbreaks, sea level and water availability.

Understanding climate processes and other perturbations helps researchers develop tools for adaptation and mitigation. Adapting to future changes in climate will protect lives and property and enable economic development and community vitality.

The U.S. Department of Interior, working with universities and other partners, has established a nationwide network of eight regional Climate Science Centers to provide crucial scientific information, tools and techniques that land, water, wildlife and cultural resource managers can apply to develop climate adaptation and mitigation responses. These centers will develop regional, landscape-level strategies for understanding and responding to climate impacts.



The Northwest Climate Science Center (NW CSC), a partnership of the University of Idaho, Oregon State University and the University of Washington in cooperation with other universities in the region, was established in fall 2010.

The center received an initial five-year grant of \$3.7 million to establish base functions at the three primary universities and an additional \$1.2 million in 2012 to implement an ambitious scientific plan of action. We anticipate an additional \$1 million to \$3 million per year to continue to fund the NW CSC's research priorities.

Accomplishments

In 2011-12, the Northwest Climate Science Center hired a permanent director and a research coordinator. Center personnel prepared a strategic plan for 2012-2015, annual work plans and reports, a multi-year science plan and a communications strategy document.

The center conducted a research request for proposals in FY12 that attracted 92 statements of interest from across the region and resulted in 11 funded project proposals. The center also funded 11 graduate research assistants at the three primary universities and implemented its week-long Climate Science Boot Camp in the summers of 2011 and 2012.

Pending goals

The Northwest Climate Science Center's plan of action for 2012-2015 is based on science assessments, stakeholder advisory oversight and technical panel reviews.

Its major focus areas include:

- Using modeling to provide resource managers with information about future climate change conditions and uncertainty; to understand how Earth's systems have responded to past climate

conditions and how they may respond in the future; and to investigate how ecosystems respond to changing climate.

- Identifying vulnerabilities of ecosystems, human health, cultural resources and infrastructure to climate change, as well as identifying practices for adaptation.
- Evaluating new methods of monitoring and observing important systems
- Improving methods for storing and analyzing data, creating models and forecasts, and communicating research results to scientists, stakeholders and the public

To date, the NW CSC has invested \$2.3 million in climate science research projects. Projects funded in FY 2012 range from examining climate change effects on Northwest environments to assessing how sagebrush ecosystems will respond to changes in temperature and precipitation. Funded research projects are featured on the NW CSC website, www.doi.gov/csc/northwest/nw-csc-annual-reports.cfm.

The center's planning and strategy documents, external advisory committee roster, annual reports and lists of funded graduate assistants can also be found on the website at www.doi.gov/csc/northwest/index.cfm.

For more information, please contact:

John K. "Jack" McIver, Vice President for Research and Economic Development
vpresearch@uidaho.edu | 208.885.6689 | www.uidaho.edu/research/federal-relations