

National Drought Resilience Partnership

As part of the President's Climate Action Plan, the Administration is launching a National Drought Resilience Partnership (the Partnership). The Partnership will make it easier for communities to access the drought assistance they need by promoting strong partnership and information sharing at all levels of government. It will also build on existing efforts to provide States, Tribes and local communities risk-informed decision making tools for drought preparedness planning. Participating agencies include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of the Interior (DOI), Assistant Secretary for the Army Civil Works (ASA-CW), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Energy (DOE).

The 2012 drought had an adverse effect on more than two-thirds of the continental United States and carried an estimated cost of \$30 billion to the agricultural sector alone. During the summer and fall of that year, wildfires in the western half of the country, which were heavily influenced by drought, resulted in estimated costs of \$1 billion (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/events>). During a series of public listening sessions in 2012, including the National Drought Forum, stakeholders recommended that Federal policies for drought needed to be better aligned and there was a need to help communities navigate the number of Federal agencies.

The Partnership aims to align Federal drought policies across the government and help communities manage the impact of drought by linking information (monitoring, forecasts, outlooks, and early warnings) with drought preparedness and long-term resilience strategies in critical sectors such as agriculture, municipal water systems, energy, recreation, tourism and transportation. Senior agency officials have been named to the Partnership and a singular point of contact has been identified who can direct and help communities seeking long-term drought planning and technical assistance navigate the various Federal agencies and programs.

The Partnership will serve as an early model for the Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, established by the President's Executive Order on Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change, to modernize Federal programs and identify opportunities to support and encourage resilience investments by States, Tribes and local communities.

Immediate and early efforts of the Partnership will focus on Federal policy coordination. Actions to be completed within Fiscal Year 2014 include:

1. **Federal Points of Contact:** At the national level, Partnership agencies will identify single policy points of contact for drought to facilitate transparency regarding agency roles and responsibilities, connect available expertise, and help align Federal policy. Further, each agency will contribute to a National Drought Implementation Working Group for the Partnership that will work with the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Executive Committee and others to align Federal agencies around their individual roles in drought planning and risk mitigation.
2. **Drought Preparedness and Water Resources Planning:** The Partnership will undertake a pilot effort in a vulnerable watershed with Tribal, State, and local government representatives, key Federal agencies, and private sector representatives to develop a model plan or approach for building drought preparedness and resilience. The pilot will aid these various entities with long-term drought

planning by connecting them with the appropriate Federal preparedness efforts as is necessary. It will also model the ability of diverse water users and interests to prepare and implement a community or watershed-based drought preparedness program. The pilot will identify obstacles to community drought preparedness and will provide the Partnership with feedback on its successes and areas that need improvement.

3. Interactive Clearinghouse: The Partnership will collaborate to organize a web based “front door” clearinghouse of Federal government drought recovery and assistance programs. The clearinghouse will link to other planning and preparedness resources and information (such as drought.gov) to support stakeholders in their efforts to manage future drought impacts. The clearinghouse portal will incorporate existing web portals to the extent practicable.
4. Increase Frequency and Regional Specificity of Drought Outlook Forums: The Partnership will contribute to the NIDIS Drought Outlook forums that integrate the best information from various experts on current drought conditions and impacts, national climate trends, and water supply and wildfire conditions. A high priority will be given to those areas where drought early warning systems and indicators show that drought conditions are developing or intensifying.
5. Coordinate a National Soil Moisture Network: The Partnership will participate in efforts underway to better organize ongoing soil moisture monitoring in support of decision-making for water supply and infrastructure, agriculture, fire risk management, and ecosystem health, to support Tribes, States, and local communities.

This Partnership will further the goals set forth in the President’s Climate Action Plan while strengthening our Nation’s preparedness and resilience to drought. For more information, please visit <http://drought.gov/drought/> to email the Partnership or contact (202) 564-8086.