

Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service Directives on Climate Change: An Overview

U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI):

- Secretarial Order 3289, signed in 2009 and amended in 2010, states that potential climate change effects necessitate changes in how the DOI manages natural resources and requires DOI agencies to incorporate climate change in planning, prioritization, and decision-making. Secretarial Order 3289 established an Energy and Climate Change Council to develop a coordinated strategy for climate change response across DOI agencies and bureaus. The Order also established two main initiatives to address the effects of climate change on U.S. natural and cultural resources, including Climate Science Centers (CSCs) and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs).
- Secretarial Order 3285 established an Energy and Climate Change Task Force that responds to the Energy and Climate Change Council. In 2011, the Task Force created a Climate Change Working Group to coordinate climate change adaptation efforts across DOI.
- A 2012 manual (manual 523), developed by the DOI Office of Policy Analysis, established Departmental policy, and, “provides guidance to bureaus and offices for addressing climate change impacts upon the Department’s mission, programs, operations, and personnel.” Directives in the manual include using the best available science to determine potential climate change effects, develop responses, and inform decision making; and incorporate climate change adaptation strategies into policies, planning, programs, and operations.
- Building on Secretarial Order 3289 and Manual 523, the DOI developed a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Fiscal Year 2013, giving an overview of DOI vulnerabilities to climate change and setting forth guiding principles for climate change adaptation in the DOI.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM):

- BLM is developing a landscape approach to managing public lands with increased recognition that partnerships and large-landscape management are needed to address complexities that transcend traditional management boundaries. In response to DOI secretarial order 3289, the BLM is developing a climate change adaptation strategy that builds on the landscape approach. This strategy will address the November 2013 Executive Order that calls for close cooperation and coordinated planning among agencies.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):

- In 2010, the USDA released its Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2010-2015. The strategic plan cited four main strategic goals and associated objectives. Strategic Goal 2 was ensure national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing water resources. Strategic Goal 2 had several objectives, including Objective 2.2, which was to lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. A performance measure

under this objective was to bring all national forests into compliance with a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy.

- The USDA developed a climate change adaptation policy statement, issued as a Departmental Regulation (DR-1070-001) in 2011, which required the USDA and each agency within to prepare a climate change adaptation plan. Response to this directive was managed by the USDA Climate Change Program Office (CCPO), which coordinates climate change-related activities and policy issues in the USDA. The CCPO developed a High-Level Analysis of Agency Vulnerability to Climate Change, and a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the USDA, which was included in the USDA 2012 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan. The Climate Change Adaptation Plan outlined planned efforts by USDA agencies to increase capacity to respond to climate change, processes for assessing climate change effects and vulnerabilities, and challenges in determining those effects and vulnerabilities. The plan also included separate adaptation plans for each USDA agency.

U.S. Forest Service:

- The Forest Service released the Strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change in 2008, which included seven strategic goals to address climate change (science, education, policy, alliances, adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable operations).
- In response to Goal 2 in the USDA Strategic Plan, and building on the Strategic Framework, the Forest Service released the National Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change for national forests in 2010. The Roadmap specified that the Forest Service will respond to climate change by 1) assessing current risks, vulnerabilities, gaps in knowledge, and policy and management effectiveness; 2) engaging employees and stakeholders to find solutions to climate change issues; and 3) managing for resilience in ecosystems and human communities through adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable operations. The intention of the Roadmap was for individual units to implement the guidelines therein based on regional guidance; local (National Forest scale) implementation would be tracked using the Performance Scorecard.
- The Performance Scorecard (Scorecard hereafter) rates national forests on how well they are responding to climate change based on ten criteria. Each national forest is expected to meet seven of the ten criteria by 2015, with one criteria met in each of four dimensions, including organizational capacity, engagement, adaptation, and mitigation. Progress in meeting Scorecard criteria is overseen by the Forest Service Climate Change Advisor's Office.