

# A Joint USDA/DOI Stakeholder Committee for Regional Climate Centers in the North Central U.S.

Concept paper, initiated by

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## Purpose

The purpose of the Joint USDA/DOI Stakeholder Committee (JSC) for Federal agencies in the North Central US pursuing climate science and service activities is to provide an effective and cost-efficient mechanism for robust climate science and services to the broad group of stakeholders in this part of the US.

## Objectives

Over the past several years, the federal government has commenced several regional climate-related initiatives such as the Department of Interior (DOI) Climate Science Centers and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives; and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Climate Hubs. This proposal recommends establishing a joint stakeholder committee to:

- 1) Provide guidance, coordination, and collaboration for the work of the USDA Northern Great Plains Region Climate Hub and the DOI North Central Climate Science Center.
- 2) Facilitate communication and awareness of federally-funded climate-related work throughout the general region defined by the union of each center's area of interest, and
- 3) Aid in the consolidation of priorities and information exchange between federal agencies and to various state, tribal, and other entities in this area.

The objectives of this joint stakeholder committee are to **maximize communication, awareness and coordination** among regional federal agencies while **eliminating redundancy and stakeholder fatigue**. Such a committee would be comprised of regional representatives from relevant federal agencies charged with natural resource management, providing services and science support. This group would be organized as a joint stakeholder committee, focused on climate issues for the spatial area described below and collectively serving the stakeholder requirements for each regional initiative.

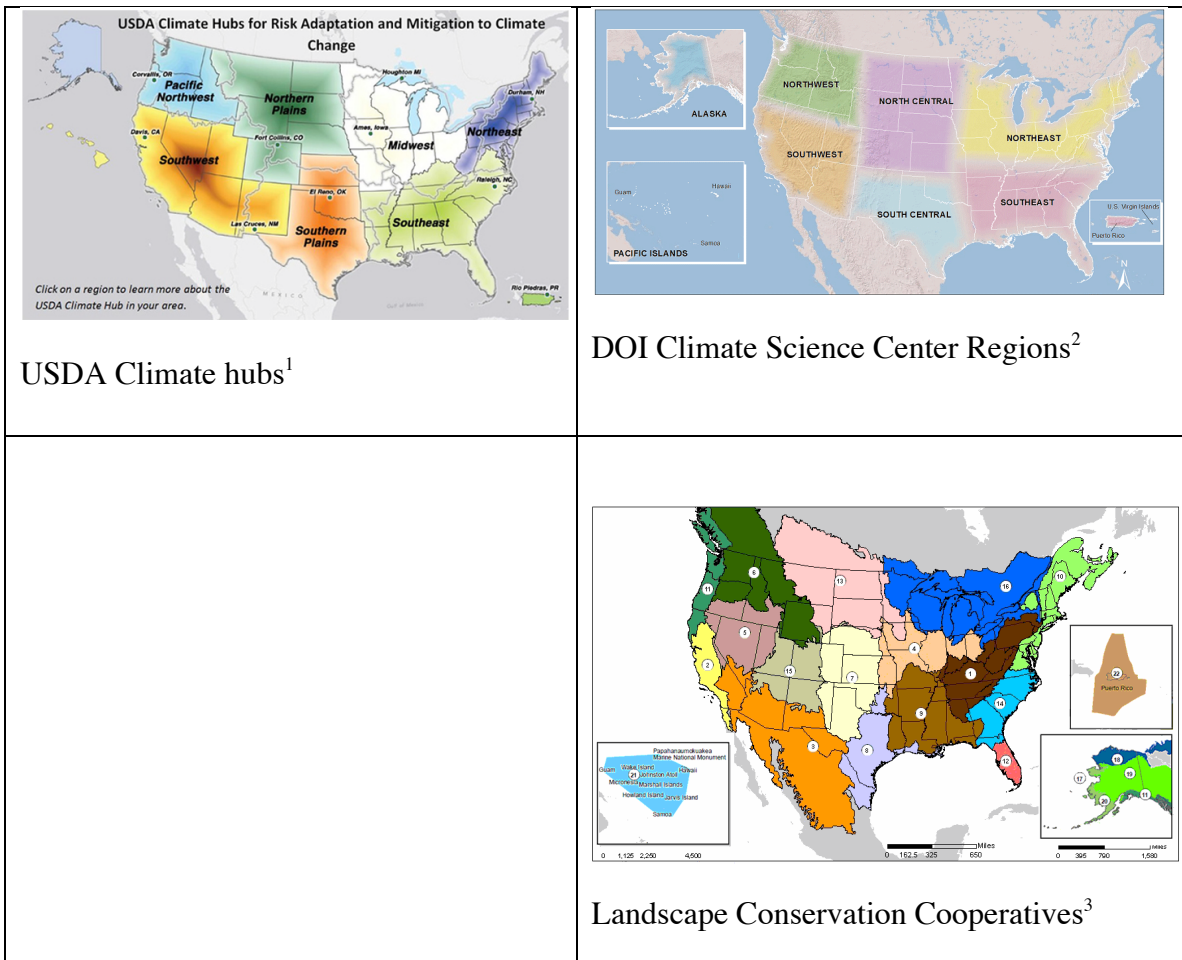
## Area of interest for the JSC

Based on the different mandates for various agencies, and historical boundaries for regional activities, there is no obvious boundary that would define an area of interest for all interagency work. Maps related to the USDA and DOI initiatives are

shown in Figure 1. Given the different mandates and missions for the various agencies, differences in regional geographies is understandable. However, to help provide some cohesion for this JSC it is helpful establish at least a rough boundary for the area of interest.

The area of interest for this JSC is the north central part of the US and is meant as a general focus area with relatively loose boundaries that can allow for flexibility as related management concerns, science questions, and geospatial data dictate. The geographic extent that is perhaps most ecologically and physically meaningful to stakeholders and partners is the Missouri River basin, including the headwaters and main stems of the James, Missouri, Platte and Kansas Rivers and the Red River of the North. This is, essentially, the north central US from the Rocky Mountain crest to the Mississippi and north of the Arkansas system. The questions addressed will be those with a climate component that are relevant to the stakeholder management concerns.

Figure 1: Maps for the USDA and DOI climate initiatives



1: [http://www.usda.gov/oc/climate\\_change/regional\\_hubs.htm](http://www.usda.gov/oc/climate_change/regional_hubs.htm)

2: <http://www.interior.gov/csc>

3: <http://lccnetwork.org/Find>

## Goals

The goals for the USDA/DOI Joint Stakeholder Committee are to:

1. Exchange of information on federal agency climate-related work in the area with the objective of increasing both efficiency and capacity.
2. Convene a regionally focused federal committee to provide a broader context for federal and state work in the region and to provide feedback on those activities.
3. Inform the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable of Missouri River Basin on climate-related activities in a coordinated manner.
4. Address national climate policy and/or executive orders that are handed down across agencies (e.g. The Climate Action Plan and Executive Order 13653); focusing on specifics for implementation at the regional level.
5. Foster collaborative approaches in support of the collection, storage, instrumentation and maintenance of climate and weather data across agencies.
6. Aid response efforts to extreme climate and weather events with communication and information delivery across the area, both internal and external to the federal agencies represented on committee.
7. Establish a recognized network of regional climate expertise and capacity to support regional partners and stakeholders.

## Leadership and Governance

1. The JSC will be self-organized with co-chairs from regional offices of USDA and DOI.
2. JSC membership is voluntary, but each federal agency listed in the roster is requested to provide at least one member. It is recognized that regions and boundaries vary across agencies, which may necessitate an agency having more than one representative.
3. The co-chairs will facilitate and organize at least one conference call every other month and one annual face-to-face meeting.
4. This organization will be made up of federal organizations. It is recognized each member of the JSC will likely have a broader non-federal partner and stakeholder list that can be a source of information and capacity for each federal entity. These relationships are recognized as valuable pathways for information from this group.

## Membership and Structure

A table of JSC membership will be compiled and posted upon confirmation and iteration with invited members.

### Appendix 1: Agency Expectations

Agency	Expectation
<b>Department of Interior North Central Climate Science Center</b>	<p>The DOI NC CSC would primarily use the committee as a mechanism for information exchange between federal, state, and local information on climate-related science and adaptation work in Missouri River Basin. The NC CSC would look to a subset of the committee, or delegates appointed from the committee, to fulfill the role of its “Stakeholder Advisor Board” which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide counsel for the development and periodic updating of the regional science agenda (5-year) for the NC CSC.</li><li>2. Provide counsel on the development of CSC planning and implementation documents, including periodic short-term science plans and strategic solicitation documents for periodic funding opportunities.</li><li>3. Provide and facilitate feedback concerning how effectively CSC products meet the needs of stakeholders.</li></ol>
<b>US Department of Agriculture Northern Plains Climate Hub</b>	<p>The USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub would primarily use this committee as a mechanism for information exchange between federal, state, and local entities regarding science and technology providers for science coordination, synthesis and tools, and the technology transfer of this information and guidance on technologies and risk management practices at regional and local scales to stakeholder and stakeholder groups engaged primarily in decision making related to agricultural production (e.g., ranchers, farmers, forest managers).</p> <p>This committee would provide the USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub with key questions and feedback related to the operation of the Hub to provide science and technology in a relevant manner through technology transfer providers to assist land managers in adapting to changing climate and weather variability.</p>