

Secretary Salazar Launches New Regional Climate Science Center

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PHOENIX, AZ—At a meeting of water leaders from the seven Colorado River Basin states in Phoenix today, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced that the Department of the Interior has chosen the University of Arizona as home base for a regional Climate Science Center..

The Southwest Climate Center is the fourth of eight planned regional Climate Science Centers—or CSCs—to be established by the Department. With the University of Arizona in Tucson as home base, the center will be led by a consortium of that school and others -- University of California, Davis; University of California, Los Angeles; Desert Research Institute, Reno; University of Colorado, Boulder; and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego.

“The consortium headed by the University of Arizona brings a wide range of scientific and impact assessment capabilities to the Southwest Climate Center because it includes institutions located in and familiar with the incredible diversity of ecosystems and human settlements and activities that characterize the U.S. Southwest,” the Secretary noted.

Selected through an open competition, the six universities announced today host the Southwest Climate Alliance, which has a combined world-class scientific expertise—including hundreds of faculty working on climate- and resource-related work essential for meeting the climate challenge. In addition to the six host institutions, the Southwest Climate Alliance also includes the following as partners: Arizona State University; Northern Arizona University; University of California, Merced; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; NASA Ames Research Center, Calif.; and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, Tucson.

BACKGROUND ON CLIMATE SCIENCE CENTERS

The Department of the Interior previously announced:

- The **Alaska Climate Science Center** hosted by the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in Anchorage.
- The **Southeast Climate Science Center** hosted by North Carolina State University
- The **Northwest Climate Science Center** led by a consortium of three universities--Oregon State University, University of Washington and the University of Idaho.

Today’s announcement covered:

- The **Southwest Climate Science Center**—University of Arizona, Tucson; University of California, Davis; University of California, Los Angeles; Desert Research Institute, Reno; University of Colorado, Boulder ; and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California in San Diego. In addition to the six host institutions, the CSC also includes the following as partners: Arizona State University; Northern Arizona University; University of California, Merced; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; NASA Ames Research Center, Calif.; and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, Tucson.

Announcements to come include:

- The **North Central Climate Science Center**—announcement by end of October
- The **Northeast, South Central, and Pacific Islands Climate Science Centers**-- Interior intends to invite proposals in the spring of 2011 to host the remaining regional centers
- Secretary Salazar initiated a coordinated climate change strategy in September 2009, with Secretarial Order 3289. The order called for establishing not only regional CSCs but also a network of **“Landscape Conservation Cooperatives”** that engage federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public in crafting practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate change impacts on natural resources. Twenty-one LCCs are planned through FY 2012.

The CSCs will serve as regional “hubs” of the **National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center**, located at the headquarters of Interior’s U.S. Geological Survey. USGS is taking the lead on establishing the CSCs and providing initial staffing. Ultimately, funds and staff from multiple Interior bureaus will be pooled to support these centers and ensure collaborative sharing of research results and data. Together, the CSCs and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives will assess the impacts of climate change that typically extend beyond the borders of any single national wildlife refuge, national park or Bureau of Land Management unit and identify strategies to ensure that resources across landscapes are resilient.

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