White House Launches Climate Data Initiative

As part of President Obama’s Climate Action Plan, the White House launched an ambitious new effort, bringing together extensive open government data and design competitions with commitments from the private sector to develop data-driven planning and resilience tools for local communities.

As part of this effort, data from NOAA, NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Defense, and other Federal agencies will be featured on climate.data.gov, a new section within data.gov that opened on March 19, 2014. The first batch of climate data focuses on coastal flooding and sea level rise. NOAA and NASA will also be announcing an innovation challenge calling on researchers and developers to create data-driven simulations to help plan for the future and to educate the public about the vulnerability of their own communities.

These and other Federal efforts will be amplified by a number of ambitious private commitments. For example, Esri, the company that produces the ArcGIS software used by thousands of city and regional planning experts, will be partnering with 12 cities across the country to create free and open “maps and apps” to help state and local governments plan for climate change impacts. Google will donate one petabyte—that’s 1,000 terabytes—of cloud storage for climate data, as well as 50 million hours of high-performance computing with the Google Earth Engine platform. The company is challenging the global innovation community to build a high-resolution global terrain model to help communities build resilience to anticipated climate impacts.

For more information on this climate data initiative, follow this link to the Whitehouse Blog. See also the Google blog, following this link. The WSWC issued a press release regarding this announcement; see this link.

FEMA Hosts America’s PrepareAthon

According to FEMA, despite an increase in weather-related disasters, nearly 70 percent of Americans have not participated in a preparedness drill or exercise, aside from a fire drill, at their workplace, school, or home in the past two years (2012 FEMA National Survey). FEMA has seen that communities are better prepared to withstand an emergency and recover more quickly when everyone is involved. In an effort to continue building resilience, the federal government is announcing the America’s PrepareAthon, which is a community-based campaign to increase emergency preparedness at the grassroots level in support of Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-8), National Preparedness.

The first America’s PrepareAthon national day of action is April 30, 2014. It will focus on preparing organizations and individuals for tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, and wild fires. America’s PrepareAthon! events and activities will be held across the country twice a year to organize community days of action and encourage individuals to discuss, practice, and train for relevant hazards. The national days of action will be held in the spring and fall, and this year, the national days of action will be April 30, 2014 and September 30, 2014.

America’s PrepareAthon will leverage the resources of the Ready Campaign and the experience of members of the National Preparedness Community to continue to increase awareness of disasters and to encourage members of the public to know the corresponding protective actions.

For questions, please visit the FEMA PrepareAthon website or email FEMA at PrepareAthon@fema.dhs.gov.

EPA & Corps Release Draft Rule on Jurisdiction

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) jointly released a proposed rule to clarify jurisdictional waters to be protected under the Clean Water Act. The EPA Administrator, Gina McCarthy, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Jo Ellen Darcy, signed the proposed rule on March 25 and March 24, respectively. Then EPA submitted it for publication in the Federal Register (FR) and public review.

See this link for more information.
WestFAST News

Federal News

03/14: Secretary Jewell Announces $3.2 Million in Grant Awards For 21 Tribal Energy and Mineral Development Projects; see link.
03/15: Secretary Jewell Highlights Power of Community-Driven Conservation in Visit to Montana Ranch, Calls for Full Funding of Land and Water Conservation Fund; see link.
03/18: USDA Helps Landowners Conserve Wetlands, Enhance Wildlife Habitat; see link.
03/18: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for March 18, 2014; see link.
03/19: Climate Data Initiative Launches with Strong Public and Private Sector Commitments; see link.
03/19: Interior Announces More Than $100 Million in Purchase Offers to Nearly 16,000 Landowners with Fractionated Interests at Pine Ridge Reservation; see link.
03/19: North Atlantic May Be a New Route for Spread of Avian Flu to North America; see link.
03/20: NOAA Predicts Moderate Flood Potential in Midwest, Elevated Risk of Ice Jams; California and Southwest Stuck with Drought; see link.
03/21: Bureau of Reclamation Releases Funding Opportunity Announcement of WaterSMART Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Feasibility Studies; see link.
03/21: Voluntary Conservation Effort Promotes Improved Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat; see link.
03/24: Conservation Organizations Join Forces to Support Conservation in the Prairies; see link.
03/25: EPA and Army Corps of Engineers Clarify Protection for Nation’s Streams and Wetlands: Agriculture’s Exemptions and Exclusions from Clean Water Act Expanded by Proposal; see link.
03/25: First Images Available from NASA-JAXA Global Rain and Snowfall Satellite; see link.
03/25: New Utah Maps and Road Provider; see link.
03/25: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for March 25, 2014; see link.
03/26: Migratory Bird Conservation Commission Approves $61 Million to Conserve 205,000 Acres of North American Wetlands; see link.
03/27: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lists Lesser Prairie-Chicken as Threatened Species and Finalizes Special Rule Endorsing Landmark State Conservation Plan; see link.
03/27: Scientists Study Effects of Water Released Across U.S.-Mexico Border; see link.
03/27: United States and Mexico Celebrate Partnership for Historic Release of Colorado River Water to Delta, Benefitting Both Nations; see link.

Upcoming WSWC Meetings & Events

- April 1-4, 2014: WSWC Spring Council Meeting and DC Roundtable, Washington DC (Crystal Gateway Marriott).

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