Sustained Assessment in the US Southwest

Benét Duncan
CSTPR Noontime Seminar
October 18, 2017
Sustained Assessment: A brief history

The National Climate Assessment (NCA): foundational information but very resource intensive + Mandated by law

NCA1 (2000)  
NCA2 (2009)  
NCA3 (2013)
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NCA1: 6 years to produce the 1st US National Climate Assessment

- Regional and sectoral workshops
- Reports from 20 regional and 5 sectoral teams
- National Assessment Synthesis Team reviews, synthesizes, & supplements reports
- Public and expert review of synthesis reports
- NCA1 reports released in 2000 and 2001
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**NCA2: 9(!!) years to produce the 2\(^{nd}\) US National Climate Assessment**

- USGCRP identified 5 research goals for NCA2
- Experts produced 21 Synthesis & Assessment Products grouped under strategic goals
- 2007 lawsuit: SAPs don’t provide a comprehensive national evaluation of impacts
- Synthesis NCA report developed by 31-member committee & released in 2009
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NCA3: 3 years to produce the 3rd US National Climate Assessment

Figure 2. This graphic illustrates the activities and products that were developed during the Third NCA report development process.

Figure from Melillo et al., 2013
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NCA3: Challenges & recommendations for sustained assessment

Challenges of the NCA:
• A burden for authors
• Scale of information
• Timeliness
• Engagement
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NCA3: Challenges & recommendations for sustained assessment

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What is Sustained Assessment?
An ongoing process of engagement and collaboration
Sustained Assessment: A brief history

NCA3: Challenges & recommendations for sustained assessment

Challenges of the NCA:
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What is Sustained Assessment?
An ongoing process of engagement and collaboration

What can it do to help?
• Leverage existing work
• Increase efficiency
• Build a network
• Foundation of useful knowledge
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Goals of this project

Develop recommendations for a sustained assessment process in the southwest that:

- Harnesses existing knowledge & capacity
- Grows & strengthens relationships
- Builds a regional sustained assessment network
- Better meets regional information needs
- Complements work for the NCA
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The game plan:

- Define project: goals & plan
- Narrow scope: identify sectors
- Develop hypothesis: what is a useful assessment?
- Identify climate service providers
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Figure 4. Sectors Served by Providers (From Meadow et al, 2016)
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The game plan:

Lay the Groundwork

- Define project: goals & plan
- Narrow scope: identify sectors
- Develop hypothesis: what is a useful assessment?
- Identify climate service providers

Hypothesized characteristics of a “useful” climate assessment:

1. Guided by needs of information users
2. Co-produced
3. Usable, timely, and relevant products and outcomes
4. Financial and institutional support
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Build an Assessment Process
- Interview climate service providers
- Identify "useful" assessments
- Develop case studies
- Identify common themes
- Build recommendations
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Share Results
- Written report
- Online portal
- In-person sharing (workshop?)
Key Challenges

Challenge 1:
What is a sustained assessment?
Does it need to focus on assessments in the traditional sense?
Key Challenges

**Challenge 1:**
What *is* a sustained assessment?

Does it need to focus on assessments in the traditional sense?

**Challenge 2:**
Range of expectations for inputs and expected uses for outcomes
Key Challenges

**Challenge 1:**
What is a sustained assessment?
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**Challenge 2:**
Range of expectations for inputs and expected uses for outcomes

**Challenge 3:**
Selecting and evaluating case studies
Key Challenges

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Key Challenges

Challenge 3: selecting & evaluating case studies

Potential selection criteria: resources & capacity needed

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>less</th>
<th>Resources and Capacity Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data: One-time observation or modeling projects</td>
<td>Data: Ongoing observation or modeling projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-time collaborative assessments or translational products</td>
<td>Ongoing collaborative assessments or translational products</td>
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Other potential selection criteria:

- Spatial scale of decision making
- Provider type
- Degree of synthesis
- Target audience: other researchers, intermediaries, end users
- Access to information produced
Summary

• Traditional assessments have some challenges
• Sustained assessment can help address those challenges

BUT

like everything with assessment, it’s complicated!
Thank you!

Suggestions? Thoughts?
benet.duncan@colorado.edu