



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

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News Release

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE: Sept. 23, 2010, 1 pm Eastern
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Department of the Interior Announces Locations of Climate Science Centers for Southeast and Northwest Regions

*North Carolina State Univ. for SE;
Oregon State, Univ. of Washington and Univ. of Idaho for NW*

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced the locations selected for the Department of the Interior's Southeast and Northwest regional Climate Science Centers and the finalization of a cooperative agreement for the Alaska Climate Science Center, which opened on Sept. 1 in Anchorage.

North Carolina State University will host the Department of the Interior's Southeast Climate Science Center. A consortium of three universities--Oregon State University, University of Washington and the University of Idaho--will lead the Northwest Climate Science Center.

These are the second and third of eight planned regional Climate Science Centers—or CSCs--to be established by the Department. As previously announced, the first CSC, the Alaska CSC, is hosted by the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in Anchorage.

“With the eight planned Climate Science Centers, we are laying the foundation for our coordinated strategy to address current and future impacts of climate change on our land, water, wildlife, cultural heritage and tribal resources,” Secretary Salazar said. “It is one of the top priorities of the Department of the Interior to put science to work to help us deal with climate change.”

Secretary Salazar initiated the 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.

“These regional Climate Science Centers and their partnership networks will provide the science needed to understand which resources are most vulnerable to climate change and will work

closely with natural and cultural resource managers faced with planning for those changes,” Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes said today.

The Southeast and Northwest CSCs were selected through an open competition. Climate science experts within the Department of Interior, U.S. Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reviewed proposals from universities.

North Carolina State University brings major expertise in biology, climate change, and applied conservation and management to deal with the threat of rising sea levels and increased stress on freshwater resources in the Southeast. The university has connections to farmers, resource managers, business people and citizens across the Southeast. It also brings an array of science and research partnerships, creating a region-wide expertise network.

The consortium of the University of Washington, Oregon State University, and the University of Idaho provides expertise in climate science, ecology, impacts assessment, modeling, and advanced information technology. This expertise will be needed to deal with critical issues in the Northwest, where changes in temperature, rain, and snowfall could have significant impacts on streams and the salmon they support as well as forests and agricultural lands.

In addition to today’s announcements, the Department will soon announce the host institutions for the North Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers. Interior intends to invite proposals in the spring of 2011 to host the remaining regional centers in the Northeast, South Central region, and Pacific Islands.

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.

Once fully instituted, the Climate Science Centers will be a “seamless network” to access the best science available to help managers in the Interior Department, states, other federal agencies, and the private and nonprofit sectors. The science agenda of each CSC will be identified through a partnership steering committee that includes Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and other federal, state, and local partners to ensure that the CSC’s work is meeting the priority needs of resource managers in each region.

Within their respective regions, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives will focus on impacts that typically extend beyond the borders of any single national wildlife refuge, national park or Bureau of Land Management unit—such as the effects of climate change on wildlife migration patterns, wildfire risk, drought, or invasive species, to name a few. Twenty-one LCCs are planned through FY 2012, about half of which will be up and running by the end of 2010.

To learn more about the Department of the Interior’s climate change strategy, visit <http://doi.gov/whatwedo/climate/strategy/index.cfm>. This site features interactive maps of

Climate Science Centers and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, as well as additional details on the services they will provide. Additional information can be found at <http://nccwsc.usgs.gov>.

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