

Introduction to the State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR), focused on North America

The Carbon Cycle chapter of the Strategic Plan for the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) describes a plan to produce “a series of increasingly comprehensive and informative reports about the status and trends of carbon emissions and sequestration,” each to be called a State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR). The Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group’s (CCIWG) Terms of Reference (TOR)¹ for a first SOCCR envisions “a series of reports on the state of the carbon cycle designed to provide accurate, unbiased, and policy-relevant scientific information concerning the carbon cycle to a broad range of stakeholders.

The two broad objectives for a SOCCR are:

1. to summarize scientific knowledge about carbon cycle properties and changes, and
2. to provide scientific information for decision support and policy formulation concerning carbon.”

This first SOCCR will be a prototype report focused on North America. The long-term vision is that in ten years the carbon cycle science community will be in a position to produce a comprehensive and useful report on the state of the global carbon cycle.

Topic: The SOCCR will provide a synthesis and integration of the current knowledge of the North American carbon budget and its role within the context of the global carbon cycle in a format useful to decision-makers. The report will address carbon emissions, natural reservoirs and sequestration, rates of transfer, the consequences of changes in carbon cycling on land and the ocean, effects of purposeful carbon management, and the socio-economic drivers and consequences of changes in the carbon cycle.

Audience: The audience for the SOCCR includes scientists, decision-makers in the public sector (federal, state, and local governments), private sector (carbon-related industry, including energy, transportation, agriculture, and forestry sectors; and climate policy and carbon management interest groups), and the general public. The primary users of the SOCCR are likely to be officials involved in formulating climate policy, individuals responsible for managing carbon in the environment, and scientists involved in assessments and/or interested in advancing the frontier of knowledge.

¹ The *Terms of Reference for a First State of the Carbon Cycle Report* can be found at <http://www.carboncyclescience.gov>. It was prepared by the Carbon Cycle Science Interagency working group in consultation with its Science Steering Group, completed in May 2003, and posted on the web in June 2003.

SOCCR Coordinating Team: The SOCCR Coordinating Team is a team of scientific and stakeholder involvement experts from five organizations (Oak Ridge National Laboratory, National Center for Atmospheric Research, University of Colorado/Boulder, Pennsylvania State University, and the Consensus Building Institute) who are responsible for organizing and outlining the SOCCR and for its final content and submission. They will identify chapter authors, coordinate all the inputs to the report, and lead the overall synthesis and integration of the information. They will provide oversight and editorial review of individual chapters and will join with the lead chapter authors in preparing any overview chapters and the Executive Summary.

As assigned by the Climate Change Science Program Interagency Committee, the lead agencies for this project are the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Representatives from this group of agencies form the SOCCR Agency Executive Committee which will ensure that the SOCCR is reviewed at all stages, that comments and other feedback are provided to the SOCCR Coordinating Team for response, and that responses are documented.

If you would like more information on the SOCCR project, please contact Gregory Zimmerman, SOCCR Project Coordinator, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (zimmermangp@ornl.gov).