

CI breakout session on CDRs. Emails from Phil to John Bates and his response.

Dear John,

Last week, the Directors of the NESDIS Cooperative Institutes, together with the Director of CREST and the senior management of STAR, held our annual meeting at CIMSS in Madison. One of the discussions centered on NOAA's evolving effort in Climate Data Records, and whether our institutes could play a useful role in that effort. After our discussion, during which we reviewed the various relevant NRC reports, two things were clear: we unanimously felt that we could, and want to, play a useful role, and we were not certain of where NOAA stands presently in implementing the program that the NRC reports put forward. In your role as co-leader of the Scientific Data Stewardship effort, you would seem to be an appropriate person to ask for information and advice. So on behalf of the Directors, I am writing to ask whether you can give us an update on current activities, as well as advice on what actions we might take that would help to advance matters. One possibility that was raised in our discussions was the convening of a workshop to discuss NOAA's plans for implementation of the NRC program, a workshop that the Institutes could help to organize and in which we could participate.

If I can provide more information, please let me know.

Best regards, Phil

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Dear Phil, thanks for your inquiry about NOAA's program for producing Climate Data Records (CDRs). Within NOAA's Climate Goal, this is called the Scientific Data Stewardship (SDS) Project. To answer your questions, what is the current status and what role may the NESDIS Cooperative Institutes play, I would like to first summarize the background, then the current status, and finish with where we are going.

Background of SDS – The background of the SDS Project is rooted in a dialog with the National Academies and the climate community. This dialogue resulted in one report from the national academies that identified the key elements in successful past climate data record generation programs and a second report on organizational structure. We believe these reports provide an excellent foundation NOAA's program. To resource this program, we planned to initially redirect some funds within NOAA's climate goal and then substantially increase funding in the out years. This process has taken longer than expected. Last year we were able to hire two talented people with extensive experience in producing climate data records to lead the project, Bruce Barkstrom and

Jeff Privette. We issued a program announcement for grants using the annual climate goal solicitation for FY07 and six were funded this past spring when we finally received the fiscal year 2007 funding. The SDS project will also be in the solicitation for fiscal year 2008 that should appear in late June.

Current status -- the SDS project has proposed to substantially ramp up resources, but we have yet to be successful in the routine NOAA budget process. Last year, the restructured NPOESS program eliminated most of the climate unique instruments. NOAA and NASA were asked by the White House to provide an assessment of those impacts. For that assessment, we relied on the expertise of the NESDIS Cooperative Institutes to help establish priorities. That assessment was well received and we were asked to do a phase 2 study that detailed mitigation options and their costs. The phase 2 study was divided into two parts, one on instruments and a second on ground systems production of CDRs. Our group has led the second part which has enabled us for the first time to make real progress in explaining our project for scientific data stewardship to the highest levels within NOAA, the Department of Commerce, and the White House. We are again engaging the National Academies in this process and they are holding a workshop this week to get community input. Following the workshop, we intend to ask the NESDIS Cooperative Institutes again for their help and expertise in this phase 2 study. Thus, we would like to immediately take you up on your offer and agree that the Cooperative institutes can play a useful role.

Where we are going -- as part of the phase 2 study, we met last week with NASA representatives to begin a discussion of the longer-term roles and responsibilities for production of climate data records. As mentioned above, we would like the Cooperative institutes to be part of that discussion which will lead to the completion of the phase 2 study by the middle of August. Following that, it would be appropriate to convene a workshop that the institutes could help to organize and participate in the late summer to early fall timeframe.

We hope this short summary of our activities is helpful. We have been extraordinarily busy in responding to requests for the phase 2 study by NOAA and the White House. We apologize for not being able to do more to involve the Cooperative Institutes. We hope the Cooperative Institutes will respond positively to our request for their input in the phase 2 study and beyond. The Cooperative Institutes are highly valuable asset given their institutional commitment to NESDIS. We look forward to working together with them more in the future.

Regards, John