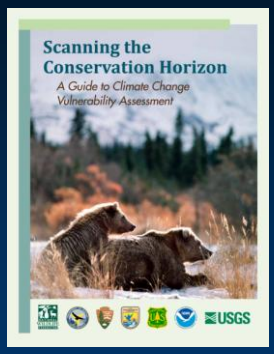


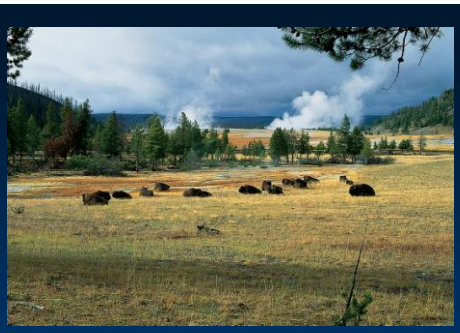
Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Training Course

Unit 1: Presentation 1
Overview of Vulnerability Assessment

Bruce Stein
National Wildlife Federation

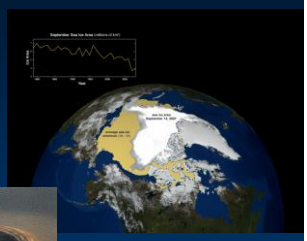
Session Goals

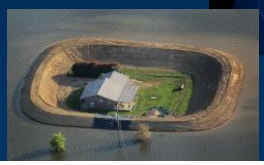
- Introduce climate change adaptation and the role of vulnerability assessment
- Summarize how vulnerability assessments can be used
- Review overall course outline and structure
- Enable participants to share interests and experiences with vulnerability assessment



"The future ain't what it used to be."
-- Yogi Berra

The Future is Now





"I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been."

- Wayne Gretzky

"…if the general public thinks nothing can be done, then nothing will be done!"

-- Steven Amstrup

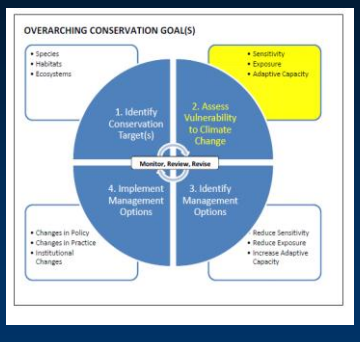
Responses to Climate Change

- Mitigation
  - Addresses causes of global warming
  - Focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Adaptation
  - Addresses impacts of global warming on people and ecosystems
  - Focus on coping strategies or safeguards

Adaptation Defined

Initiatives and measures designed to *reduce the vulnerability* of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate changes

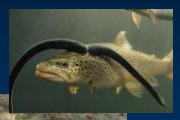
Adaptation Planning Framework

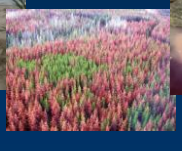
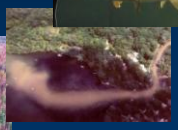


Defining Vulnerability

Climate change vulnerability refers to the extent to which a species, habitat, or ecosystem is susceptible to harm from climate change impacts

- *What* things are most vulnerable
- *Why* they are vulnerable



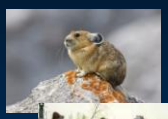
Why Assess Vulnerability?

Vulnerability assessments can help:

- Prioritize species and systems for management actions
- Develop management strategies to address climate change
- Efficiently allocate resources

What vulnerability assessments *don't* do:

- Make a conservation decision for you



Key Course Objectives

- Understand vulnerability assessment in broader context of adaptation planning
- Evaluate factors influencing vulnerability and how they affect an assessment
- Understand strengths and limitations of various approaches
- Design a vulnerability assessment applicable to your needs
- Interpret assessment results and communicate results to stakeholders

Course Outline

1. Overview and Foundational Concepts (Mon)
2. Elements of a Vulnerability Assessment (Mon)
3. Approaches to Vulnerability Assessment (Tues)
4. Tools Café (Tues)
5. Building a Vulnerability Assessment (Tues - Wed)
6. Interpreting and Applying Results (Wed)
7. Vulnerability in Alaska (Thurs)