

July 30, 2013

Friends of WICCI:

The challenges of climate change will be with us for a long time. The people of Wisconsin will need to understand and adapt to changes in summer heat, winter snow, growing seasons, rainfall, habitat location, and more.

The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) exists to help with those efforts.

WICCI is built upon a unique approach to the problem of adaptation, bringing together a network of individuals and organizations representing a variety of interests and perspectives. In its first five years, WICCI has significantly advanced climate science and the discussion of adaptation.

The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are the founding partners of WICCI. We are pleased to continue that support as sponsors of this strategic plan.

WICCI benefits the Nelson Institute, UW-Madison and the entire UW System by fostering collaboration among scientists and by connecting research to public policy and management. It benefits the Department of Natural Resources by making science available to support adaptation to environmental change.

This strategic plan will enable WICCI to continue to help the people of Wisconsin address the challenges of climate change.

Paul Robbins
Director
Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
University of Wisconsin — Madison

Al Shea
Director
Office of Business Support and Sustainability
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Strategic Plan

Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI)

July 30, 2013

Sponsors

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Al Shea, Director, Office of Business Support and Sustainability, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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Acknowledgements

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We also thank the many individuals who have already contributed to WICCI as working group members, partners, advocates, leaders, and supporters — often on their personal time. They are responsible for WICCI's success.

Finally, we thank in advance those individuals who will carry WICCI forward in implementing this strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Daniel J. Vimont and William D. Walker. The signature on the left is for Daniel J. Vimont and the signature on the right is for William D. Walker.

Daniel J. Vimont
WICCI Co-Chairs

William D. Walker

Background

The Role of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan explains the mission, vision, and strategies that will govern the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) for the next five years. This plan is addressed to current participants in WICCI, especially members of working groups and the operational team. Stakeholders and observers may also find it informative.

The **mission** explains the unique and enduring role of WICCI. The **vision** describes what WICCI will accomplish in the next five years. The **strategies** are means of attaining the vision.

A Brief History of WICCI

The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts began in 2007 as a partnership between the University of Wisconsin Nelson Institute, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and several other organizations. WICCI's purpose was to “assess and anticipate climate change impacts in Wisconsin...and to develop and recommend adaptation strategies”.

In 2011, WICCI issued its first assessment report: *Wisconsin's Changing Climate: Impacts and Adaptation Strategies*. The report projected Wisconsin's future climate using a historically-calibrated downscaling method and discussed effects of future climate change on various ecosystems, regions, and human activities. The report focused on climate change and its impacts, and also commented on issues and options for adaptation to climate change. Sixteen stakeholder working groups contributed to the report.

WICCI devoted 2012 to outreach activities, continued work on climate modeling, and discussions within the Department of Natural Resources on approaches to adaptation. In 2013, the WICCI Science Council, responding to the need to chart the course for the coming years, initiated the development of this strategic plan.

Previous WICCI Organization

Initially, WICCI was comprised of five entities:

- **Science Council** — Originally meant to establish working groups and coordinate their activities. Later became the *de facto* governing (but not administrative) body for WICCI. Composed of university scientists, state and federal agency managers and staff.

- **Working Groups** — Sixteen separate groups, ranging in size from a few to over 20 members, drawn from many different stakeholder organizations. Each working group focused on a particular subject (e.g., wildlife) or place (e.g., Green Bay). Working groups organized research on their topics and contributed to the first assessment report.
- **Advisory Council** — Stakeholder representatives from industry, local government, and other organizations. Created to provide guidance to WICCI, it was engaged early on, but not recently.
- **Coordinating Committee** — Created circa 2011 to manage day-to-day operations, seek funding, and perform similar tasks beyond the scope of the science council.
- **Outreach Roundtable** — Created at the release of the first assessment report to promote outreach.

Need for Organizational Change

WICCI's previous organization was well suited to WICCI's goals in the first phase. Its next five-year vision has different goals, and needs a revised organization. Specifically, WICCI needs the following:

- Closer coordination among working groups, and between working groups and other WICCI entities.
- Clearer overall direction for the working groups.
- Greater connection between internal and external stakeholders.
- Clearer assignment of duties, particularly for governance and day-to-day management.
- Stronger support for communication among all groups in WICCI.

Themes in the Strategic Plan

Two themes underlie this strategic plan: *adaptation* and *facilitation*.

The first theme continues from 2009: WICCI works on *adaptation to climate change*, not mitigation of climate change. People will benefit from information about local climate changes impacts and adaption opportunities in their management of human and natural resources, and in policy development.¹

The second theme builds on WICCI's success: WICCI works to *facilitate* adaptation to climate change, not to direct or manage such adaptation.

¹ Although mitigation is an important policy issue, some amount of climate change is inevitable, regardless of mitigation efforts. Work on mitigation would strain WICCI's limited resources and reduce its ability to support adaptation efforts.

Adaptation to climate change occurs in a larger social context. Individuals and organizations have different values and mandates, so no single adaptation strategy will fit everyone. Furthermore, other goals accompany — or even eclipse — climate adaptation goals. For instance, a community may seek to adapt to climate change in a particular way that supports environmental sustainability more generally. WICCI makes the science of climate adaptation available for use by others, helping them to achieve sustainable adaptation.

WICCI as a Network

While we refer to WICCI as if it were a single organization, it is actually a *network* of distinct groups.

WICCI is an amalgam: the science and stakeholder advisory groups provide guidance and direction to the working groups, which comprise individuals from many governmental, university, and private organizations. Members of the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources play roles in each of those groups. WICCI also includes partnerships and affiliations with other climate groups, universities, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. WICCI's management activity is limited to the small operations group, which manages communications, meetings, outreach, and related activities.

WICCI as a network produces important work in adaptation. While the work itself comes from — and is funded by — the organizations within the network, it would not be possible without the benefits the network provides.

Mission

The Mission of the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts is to generate and share information that can limit vulnerability to climate change in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

WICCI engages citizens; private and public decision-makers; and scientists from Wisconsin and the region in a collaborative network to:

- develop scientific understanding of climate impacts;
- identify vulnerability to climate change and climatic variability; and
- enable better planning, investment, and other adaptation activities.

Vision

Over the next five years, the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts will inspire recognition from national, regional, and local adaptation communities in five areas:

- **Leadership** in climate impacts and adaptation
- **Quality and Scope** of science and work
- **Credibility** of information
- **Relevance** to management and policy development
- **Fostering Connections** among people and communities

Leadership in climate impacts and adaptation

At the national and regional level, WICCI will be recognized as a model of effective leadership in climate adaptation. Local communities and regional stakeholders will recognize and consult WICCI for scientific information that informs climate adaptation.

Quality and scope of work

WICCI's research will contribute to national, regional, and local climate modeling and impact assessment. WICCI will be recognized by a broad and diverse set of communities for its ability to coordinate and catalyze efforts at understanding and adapting to climate change impacts.

Credibility of information

The credibility of the information that WICCI produces will be valued across a wide range of science and stakeholder communities. WICCI will produce

information and adaptation activities that are unbiased, grounded in scientific best practices, and endorsed by both scientist and stakeholder communities.

Relevance to management and policy development

WICCI will be recognized for its ability to identify information needs within management and policy communities, and to coordinate and develop research and outreach activities to address those needs.

Fostering connections among people and communities

WICCI will be seen as an integral component of climate adaptation activities in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest due to its ability to produce information, and to connect science with management and policy activities.

Our Strategies

To achieve its vision, WICCI will use five strategies:

1. Restructure Leadership Groups
2. Reestablish Working Groups
3. Establish, Strengthen, and Track Alliances
4. Increase and Solidify Operational Funding
5. Formalize and Expand Communications Systems

1. Restructure Leadership Groups

by transition team and new leadership group members; summer-fall, 2013

Restructuring Objectives

- Define leadership group roles more clearly.
- Define roles and responsibilities of group members.
- Separate the role of advising on science from the role of coordinating working group activities.
- Make explicit the decentralized, networked character of WICCI.
- Consolidate the central operations support role (funding, planning, outreach, and communications)

Groups

Establish a *Working Groups Council*, two *Advisory Boards* (science and outcomes), and one *Coordination Team*. Each group will have brief bylaws addressing the group's role; members' duties and responsibilities; and member turnover.

Working Groups Council:

- Coordinate and direct activities of working groups.
- Meet monthly or bi-monthly for working groups to share progress, advise on questions, and set direction, develop outreach messages.
- Members: working group chairs or designees; representatives of Nelson Institute and Department of Natural Resources.

Science Advisory Board:

- Advise Working Groups Council, recommend working group topics, and evaluate WICCI work products from a *scientific* perspective.
- Advise on international and national trends in climate science and related scientific topics.
- Facilitate WICCI alliances and funding support in the *scientific* community, at the national and regional level.
- Meet quarterly or bi-monthly to receive updates and review WICCI products.
- Members: University, government agency, and other representatives chosen for *scientific* expertise, influence, and interest in WICCI success. *Ex officio* members from other WICCI groups.

Outcomes Advisory Board:

- Advise Working Groups Council, recommend working group topics, and evaluate WICCI work products from an *impacts and adaptation* perspective.
- Facilitate WICCI alliances and funding support with those affected by climate change, including governments, nonprofits, and businesses.
- Meet quarterly or bi-monthly to receive updates and review WICCI products.
- Members: Representatives from business, nonprofit, local government, state agency, and other groups chosen for expertise in politics, business, and regulation; influence; and interest in WICCI success. *Ex officio* members from other WICCI groups.

Coordination Team:

- Day-to-day operational support, meeting management, web services, etc.
- Coordination, tracking, and support of other groups' activities, especially communications and outreach.
- Central point of contact and clearinghouse for information requests.
- Management of WICCI operational funds.
- Members: WICCI co-chairs, Nelson Institute and Department of Natural Resources representatives, support staff.

2. Reestablish Working Groups

by Working Groups Council and individual working groups leaders; fall 2013 – spring 2014

The working groups do WICCI's main work. It is essential that working groups interact with one another to share progress, support one another's efforts, and identify questions.

The Working Groups Council should do the following:

- Create a working group charter template, job descriptions, and roles for working group chairs and members.
- Review current working groups for relevance; identify needed groups and lead their formation.
- Receive and approve charters for individual working groups.

3. Establish, Strengthen, and Track Alliances

Working Groups Council and Coordination Team; spring 2014 and ongoing

WICCI has developed alliances with a variety of organizations. Those alliances should be strengthened and additional alliances should be formed. Because WICCI is a network, alliances may be made directly by a Leadership Group or Working group.

The Coordination Team should track and update alliances formed through the other groups and share that information within WICCI and publicly using lists and maps. The Coordination Team may establish categories of alliances, and acknowledge particularly strong or supporting alliances.

4. Increase and Solidify Operational Funding

Coordination Team with the council and boards; summer 2013 and ongoing

Most of the activities of WICCI are supported in-kind by members of leadership and working groups. However, the Coordination Team requires ongoing, stable funding to support the WICCI network. The Coordination Team will seek funding and in-kind support broadly, including from the following sources:

- Wisconsin DNR and UW Nelson Institute.
- Other UW organizations.
- Stakeholders with highest need for WICCI products (via Outcomes Advisory Board).
- Nonprofit foundations.
- Federal grants, particularly those focused on interdisciplinary work, sustainability, and innovative environmental governance.

5. Formalize and Expand Communications Systems

Coordination Team with the council and boards; fall 2013 and ongoing

As a network, the lifeblood of WICCI is communication. WICCI needs both internal communication and external (outreach) communication. Details:

- Internal communication manages the WICCI network and fosters collaboration and coordination among leadership and working groups.
- External communication:
 - includes state & local stakeholders and regional & national groups. Examples: schools, local governments, universities, climate adaptation groups, nonprofits, and federal agencies.
 - is developed in cooperation with working group to reflect their needs.
 - also gathers information *from* stakeholders and shares it within WICCI. Examples: opportunities for collaboration, examples of adaptation, and research needs.
- The Coordination Team:
 - serves as a central point of contact and clearinghouse.
 - develops the WICCI website and social media presence, and makes them available to leadership and working groups.
 - synthesizes information from outside groups to make it accessible to WICCI groups.

- directs WICCI members to resources for improving communication skills
- facilitates the use of WICCI information by other educators and organizations