

High Plains Regional Climate Center Climate Focal Point Short Course



BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

With a seemingly overwhelming amount of climate data and information available these days, addressing the needs of the Climate Focal Points and engaging them as collaborators is imperative to enhancing Regional Climate Services (RCS) in the Central Region and beyond.

The High Plains Regional Climate Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in partnership with the NOAA Central Region Collaboration Team, conducted an in-person short course on September 22—24, 2015. This opportunity focused on NWS Climate Focal Points, representing nine different forecast offices. Using funding support from the NOAA Central Region Collaboration Team for supplies and participant travel, a minimal amount of money made a big impact on the region by increasing capacity to address people's climate-related needs.

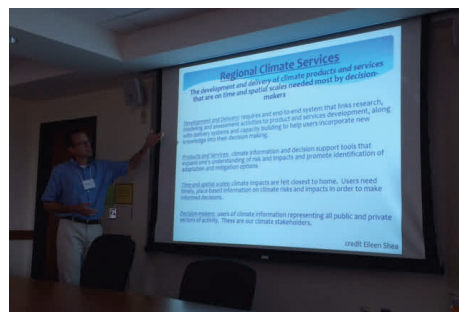
COURSE TOPICS

The short course covered several areas to provide awareness and training for a wide range of climate products and services. Sessions included:

- Introduction to Regional Climate Services and key regional partners such as Regional Climate Service Directors, Regional Climate Centers, State Climatologists and the National Drought Mitigation Center
- Hands-on experience with climate data and information tools like xMACIS, ACIS-WS, and other online products
- Mesonets in the Missouri River Basin
- Collaborative Opportunities and Networking among Climate Focal Points

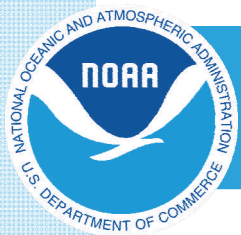
FUTURE COURSES

Using evaluations and feedback from participants, this first short course helps lay the framework for additional training in 2016 and 2017. The goal is to create Climate Focal Points and other NWS staff who are not only knowledgeable of Regional Climate Services, but can also participate and collaborate in applied climate research and outreach activities within the region.



What did a participant say was the most valuable aspect of the course?

"Being able to network and brainstorm ideas with other climate-savvy folks from across the region, including neighboring offices. Building these relationships is a benefit that will last much longer than the meeting itself."

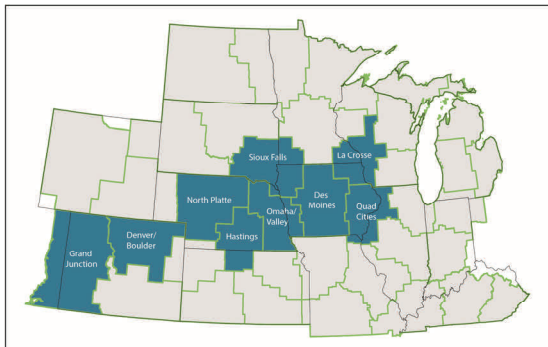


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PARTICIPANTS

Coming from nine different Weather Forecast Offices in the Central Region, 13 participants who had some familiarity with regional climate services and tools were selected to attend the course.



RESULTS

Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback for the course and valuable recommendations for future offerings. Some of the comments received included:

- “Excellent idea to hold this kind of thing...definitely helps to bridge the ‘gap’ between various agencies and open communication lines better.”
- “Great workshop. I see eyes lighting up and ideas churning. That’s always a great thing!”
- “I found the opportunity to learn exactly what was the focus of the HPRCC to be of value. There is a great untapped resource for collaboration and exchange of ideas.”



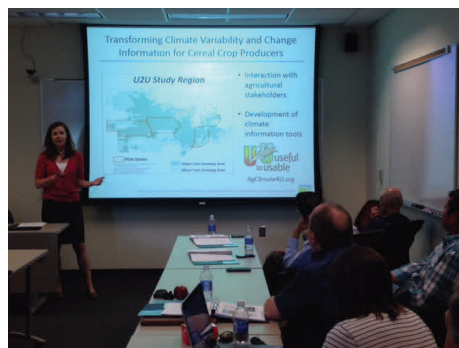
NEXT STEPS

Participants identified opportunities to continue collaboration on regional climate services. These include:

- Enhancements to climate tools, such as xmACIS
- Working to ensure support to attend state fairs
- Developing presentation templates for climate engagement with a variety of sectors
- Exploring opportunities for sub-regional partnership meetings
- Sharing information—including making connections with local users, linking HPRCC into NWSchat, and identifying research project opportunities



The next Climate Focal Point Short Course will be held at the High Plains Regional Climate Center at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln in the summer of 2016.



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