

**Climate Issues Committee Report**  
**WY Dept. of State Parks & Cultural Resources**  
**12/14/09**

Agency response to climate change

The State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails Division is attempting to address several components of this issue that effect the natural resources in its charge including the impacts of beetle kill, drought, and invasive species. Strategies will be focused on both mitigation and interpreting these impacts for the public.

In addition, the agency has established a “Green Team” that is working to make policy recommendations on green practices within the agency inclusive of recommendations for conservation practices, usage of renewable energy and “green” buying practices.

Climate variability has impacted the agency recently as severe thunderstorm events during the spring and summer of 2009 resulted in flood damage to state parks infrastructure, particularly in Guernsey, Glendo and Boysen State Parks.

Impact to individual agency programs:

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) - Climate change is one of the drivers behind the explosion in the development of winder energy in Wyoming. The most serious emerging issue for the State Historic Preservation Office is the pace of wind energy development as it impacts the state’s cultural resources, particularly view sheds for national historic trails.

State Trails Program – Climate change is having an immediate, tangible effect on the program’s snowmobile program. Given the program’s role in statewide snowmobile trail grooming, seasons with less snow impact how the program is perceived commensurate with negative impacts to the state’s winter recreation and tourism industry. Given that trail quality is dependent on sustained below freezing temperatures in order for freshly groomed trails to “set” properly, trail quality is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain as instances of prolonged overnight temperatures below freezing become less and less frequent.

National Perspective

Climate change has been identified as one of two top issues for the National Association of State Parks Directors. The other issue concerns the disconnect between children and nature and is seen as closely related to the climate change issue. A national steering committee is being created to work on coordinated strategies and best practices for confronting the issue.

## States Association for Natural Resources (SANR)

SANR exists to encompass the broader scope of natural resource issues that are in the purview of different state agencies and provide a forum for identifying shared issues, collaborative policy formation, and a common voice for articulating and influencing national natural resource policy, as in, for instance, ensuring that the carbon sequestration value of lands managed by state natural resource agencies are accounted for in any cap and trade legislation. Concern regarding climate change has been the main impetus behind this effort. Other collaborative policies being discussed include 1) the need to account for the impacts and planning needs of state natural resource agencies in adapting to climate change and 2) the advisability of considering the development of renewable energy on state owned lands managed by state natural resource agencies. Director Simpson is a member of SANR's "leadership team" which includes state Dept. of Natural Resources agency heads from several states.