



Environmental Data and Governance Initiative Website Tracking Confirmation Report

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Confirmation of Changes to Department of the Interior's Climate Change Page

This report confirms changes to websites described by the following article:
["The Interior Department Just Quietly Scrubbed Its Climate Change Page"](#)

April 28, 2017

Writing and review of this report was conducted and overseen by the members of EDGI's Website Monitoring Committee: Maya Anjur-Dietrich, Andrew Bergman, Gretchen Gehrke, and Toly Rinberg,

ADDITIONAL CONFIRMATION DISCLAIMER - *This confirmation report has gone through an abbreviated vetting procedure in order to quickly confirm changes to websites that were published in a news article. A Website Tracking Report, which will be fully vetted, will be written, referencing this report, to characterize any changes not described in the article.*

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Confirmation of Changes to Department of the Interior's Climate Change Page

The Department of the Interior (DOI) made changes to its "Climate Change" page, removing and re-writing descriptive paragraphs and entire sections. This report confirms the changes to DOI's doi.gov/climate page reported on by Motherboard's Sarah Emerson in "[The Interior Department Just Quietly Scrubbed Its Climate Change Page](#)". EDGI's Website Tracking Team will follow up with further investigation into these changes and others within the doi.gov/climate domain.

Description of Changes Confirmed

DOI's "Climate Change" page was reformatted, and informational text was removed. Among the removals were sections describing stated agency responsibilities and sections detailing the framework through which DOI's bureaus coordinate on climate change issues.

A list of notable changes will be included in a follow-up EDGI Website Tracking Report on changes to DOI's Climate Change page and related pages. A detailed description of changes can be found below.

Detailed Description of Changes

Page 1: Climate Change

- URL: <https://www.doi.gov/climate>
- Side-by-side View: 2/26/17 to 4/27/17
- Changes occurred between **Feb 26, 2017 0:11 AM ET** and **Apr 27, 2017 5:06 PM ET**

Note: This unusually wide range of times is due to the fact that this page was not being tracked by software that EDGI uses—past versions were accessed using the Internet Archive. We do not use information from web page source code or last updated dates to establish change timeframe, as it is not possible to corroborate that those dates pertain to any particular change.

Screenshot 1.1

(1.1a) Removed paragraph “Climate change affects every corner of the American continent. It is making droughts drier and longer, floods more dangerous and hurricanes more severe.

(1.1b) Removed paragraph “The glaciers in Montana's Glacier National Park are melting so quickly, they're expected to disappear in the next two decades. Rising seas are consuming the world's first wildlife refuge – Florida's Pelican Island – which President Teddy Roosevelt set aside in 1903.”

(1.1c) Updated paragraph from:

“At the U.S. Department of the Interior, we manage one-fifth of the land in the country, 35,000 miles of coastline, and 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. We also uphold the federal government's trust responsibilities to 562 Indian tribes; conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats; manage water supplies for more than 30 million people; and protect the icons of our national heritage.”

To:

“The U.S. Department of the Interior manages one-fifth of the land in the United States, 35,000 miles of coastline, and 1.7 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. The Department also upholds the federal government's trust responsibilities to 567 Indian tribes; conserves fish, wildlife, and their habitats; manages water supplies for more than 30 million people; and protects America’s natural treasures.”

(1.1d) Added paragraph “The impacts of climate change have led the Department to focus on how we manage our nation’s public lands and resources. The Department of the Interior contributes sound scientific research to address this and other environmental challenges.”

(1.1e) Removed paragraph “The impacts of climate change are forcing us to change how we manage these resources. Climate change may dramatically affect water supplies in certain watersheds, impact coastal wetlands and barrier islands, cause relocation of and stress on wildlife, increase wildland fires, further spread invasive species, and more.”

(1.1f) Removed paragraph “We at Interior are taking the lead in protecting our nation's resources from these impacts and in managing our public lands to mitigate the effects of climate change.”

(1.1g) Removed section “The framework through which our bureaus coordinate climate-change science and resource-management strategies includes:” and removed subsequent subsections:

- “A Climate Change Response Council”

Removed section text:

“Under the leadership of secretary, deputy secretary and counselor, this council coordinates our response to the impacts of climate change within and among our bureaus. It also works to improve the sharing and communication of climate-change impact science, including through www.data.gov.”

- “Eight DOI Regional Climate Science Centers”

Removed section text:

“Serving Alaska, the Northeast, the Southeast, the Southwest, the Midwest, the West, Northwest, and Pacific regions, these centers synthesize existing climate-change-impact data and management strategies, help resource managers put them into action on the ground, and engage the public through education initiatives.

CSCs are regional entities that extend from the [National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center \(NCCWSC\)](#), located at USGS headquarters. The NCCWSC was established by Congress in 2008 to help deliver scientific and technical information to help resource managers cope with a changing climate. Working in partnership with resource managers and scientists at national, regional, and landscape levels, the NCCWSC:

- Forecasts fish and wildlife population and habitat changes in response to climate change.
 - Assesses the vulnerability and risk of species and habitats to climate change.
 - Links models of physical climate change (such as temperature and precipitation) with models that predict ecological, habitat, and population responses.
 - Develops standardized approaches to monitoring and help link existing monitoring efforts to climate and ecological or biological response models.”
- “A Network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives”

Removed section text:

“These cooperatives engage Interior and other and federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public to craft practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate-change impacts within the eight regions. They focus on impacts such as the effects of climate change on wildlife migration patterns, wildfire risk, drought, or invasive species that typically extend beyond the borders of any single National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management unit, or national park.”

(1.1h) Added “Resources” section:

- [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- [Bureau of Ocean Energy Management](#)
- [Climate Science Centers](#)

- [National Park Service](#)
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)
- [U.S. Geological Survey](#)

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Climate Change webpage. The left screenshot is dated February 26, 2016, and the right screenshot is dated April 27, 2017. Both pages feature a navigation bar with 'About', 'Bureaus', 'Priorities', 'Join', and 'News'. The main content area includes a title 'Climate Change', an introductory paragraph, a list of bullet points, and a list of resources.

Climate Change

Climate change affects every corner of the American continent. It is making droughts drier and longer, floods more dangerous and hurricanes more severe.

The glaciers in Montana's Glacier National Park are melting so quickly, they're expected to disappear in the next two decades. Rising seas are consuming the world's first wildlife refuge – Florida's Pelican Island – which President Teddy Roosevelt set aside in 1903.

At the U.S. Department of the Interior, we manage one-fifth of the land in the country, 35,000 miles of coastline, and 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. We also uphold the federal government's trust responsibilities to 562 Indian tribes, conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats; manage water supplies for more than 30 million people, and protect the icons of our national heritage.

The impacts of climate change are forcing us to change how we manage these resources. Climate change may dramatically affect water supplies in certain watersheds, impact coastal wetlands and barrier islands, cause relocation of and stress on wildlife, increase wildland fires, further spread invasive species, and more.

We at Interior are taking the lead in protecting our nation's resources from these impacts and in managing our public lands to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The framework through which our bureaus coordinate climate-change science and resource-management strategies includes:

- **A Climate Change Response Council** — Under the leadership of secretary, deputy secretary and counselor, this council coordinates our response to the impacts of climate change within and among our bureaus. It also works to improve the sharing and communication of climate-change impact science, including through www.diaa.gov.
- **Eight DOI Regional Climate Science Centers** — Serving Alaska, the Northeast, the Southeast, the Southwest, the Midwest, the West, Northwest, and Pacific regions, these centers synthesize existing climate-change-impact data and management strategies, help resource managers put them into action on the ground, and engage the public through education initiatives.

CSCs are regional entities that extend from the [National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center \(NCCWSC\)](#), located at USGS headquarters. The NCCWSC was established by Congress in 2008 to help deliver scientific and technical information to help resource managers cope with a changing climate. Working in partnership with resource managers and scientists at national, regional, and landscape levels, the NCCWSC:

- Forecasts fish and wildlife population and habitat changes in response to climate change.
- Assesses the vulnerability and risk of species and habitats to climate change.
- Links models of physical climate change (such as temperature and precipitation) with models that predict ecological, habitat, and population responses.
- Develops standardized approaches to monitoring and help link existing monitoring efforts to climate and ecological or biological response models.

- **A Network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives** — These cooperatives engage Interior and other and federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public to craft practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate-change impacts within the eight regions. They focus on impacts such as the effects of climate change on wildlife migration patterns, wildfire risk, drought, or invasive species that typically extend beyond the borders of any single National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management unit, or national park.

Climate Change

The U.S. Department of the Interior manages one-fifth of the land in the United States, 35,000 miles of coastline, and 1.7 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. The Department also upholds the federal government's trust responsibilities to 567 Indian tribes; conserves fish, wildlife, and their habitats; manages water supplies for more than 30 million people; and protects America's natural treasures.

The impacts of climate change have led the Department to focus on how we manage our nation's public lands and resources. The Department of the Interior contributes sound scientific research to address this and other environmental challenges.

Resources:

- [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- [Bureau of Ocean Energy Management](#)
- [Climate Science Centers](#)
- [National Park Service](#)
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)
- [U.S. Geological Survey](#)

Internet Archive: [previous version from Feb 26, 2016](#) and [current version from Apr 27, 2017](#)