

**Scanning the Conservation Horizon**  
A Guide to Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

**Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Training Course**  
August 16-18, 2011

Unit 1: Presentation 1  
Overview of Vulnerability Assessment  
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National Wildlife Federation

Logos for EPA, NOAA, USGS, and other organizations are visible at the bottom of the book cover.

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**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

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

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## "The Future is Not What it Used to Be"



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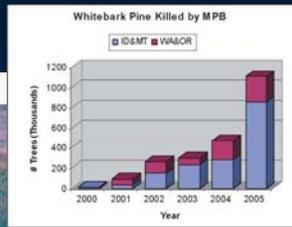
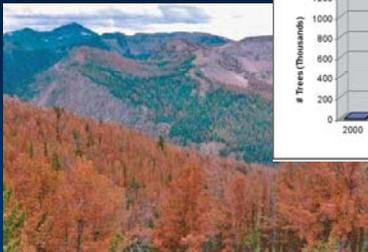
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## We are Already Facing Change



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## 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



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## Adaptation Defined

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



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## Adaptation Planning Framework



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## 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



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### 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



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### 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

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### Course Outline

1. Overview and Foundational Concepts (Tues)
2. Elements of a Vulnerability Assessment (Tues)
3. Approaches to Vulnerability Assessment (Wed)
4. Building a Vulnerability Assessment (Wed - Thurs)
5. Interpreting and Applying Results (Thurs)
6. Wrap-Up and Evaluation (Thurs)

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