

Climate Adaptation for DoD Natural Resource Managers: A Guide to Incorporating Climate Considerations into Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans

Over the coming decades, Department of Defense (DoD) installations will experience significant risks from climate-driven changes in the environment, which could compromise the capacity of these lands and waters to support readiness activities. To address these risks, DoD Instruction 4715.03 requires DoD natural resources managers to incorporate climate adaptation strategies into installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) when updating or revising their INRMPs. The [Climate Adaptation for DoD Natural Resource Managers](#) guide and corresponding [Commander's Guide to Climate Adaptation for DoD Natural Resource Managers](#) were developed to help installation managers implement that policy.

Concern about climate-related impacts and risks has sparked the emergence of a new field of practice known as climate adaptation. For DoD purposes, climate adaptation is defined as “adjustment in natural or human systems in anticipation of or response to a changing environment in a way that effectively uses beneficial opportunities or reduces negative effects” (DoD Directive 4715.21). More generally, adaptation actions should reduce climate-related vulnerabilities or enhance resilience. At its most basic level, adaptation planning is an iterative risk management process, and should be tailored to each installation’s particular mission, resources, and needs. There are, however, general principles and processes that apply broadly, and will support effective adaptation planning and implementation across the varied array of DoD lands, waters, and assets.

Accordingly, the full guide introduces installation managers to overarching adaptation concepts and principles, and is structured around a generalized, yet flexible, INRMP adaptation planning process consisting of the following steps:

1. Set context for adaptation planning
2. Assess climate vulnerabilities and risks

3. Evaluate implications for INRMP goals and objectives
4. Develop strategies and actions to reduce climate risks
5. Implement adaptation actions and projects
6. Monitor and adjust adaptation actions

The guide consists of two major sections:

Part I includes an overview of climate risks to military installations and mission requirements; an introduction to adaptation; a brief primer on climate science; a review of options for incorporating climate concerns into INRMPs; and a summary of climate and adaptation considerations for individual INRMP program elements.

Part II offers a step-by-step method for carrying out the INRMP adaptation planning process. A series of appendices provide sources of adaptation-related information and expertise, and a set of detailed worksheets that support installation-level application of the six-step planning process.

The Commander’s Guide was more recently developed to provide DoD leadership an overview of the full guide. The Commander’s Guide is designed to help military leadership better understand how climate impacts to DoD natural resources can pose risks to training and testing capabilities, and how installations and their natural resource managers can plan for these risks to enhance installation resilience and sustain military readiness.

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<https://denix.osd.mil/nr/DoDAdaptationGuide>

