

Attribution of climate-related events

Audiences:

- scientists within NOAA and elsewhere

- technical users: water resource managers, ag

- media

- policymakers

- general public

Need for more info on who is using this and for what purposes – what are “attribution products” ?

Users want information, projections that answer their questions

What should we be attempting to attribute?

- What happened? Why did it happen? And will it happen again?
- How do we know? (why should I believe you?)
- Has it happened before and if so, how did it compare to this?
- Can we expect even more of this in the future?
- If so, how much more frequent and/or intense?
- If so, what are our response options?

Who is a reliable source?

- Different sources for different audiences
- Climate, not just climate change – bring in people who are resistant to the idea of human-induced climate change
- Confidence statements are helpful – better than “uncertainty” or “statistical significance” for public
- Our own confidence – we need to be clear about our assumptions and state but not overstate the caveats

Production and Distribution of Info

- Need for a formal, coordinated team working on attribution and responsible for putting out information (beyond NOAA) – operational, ongoing activity, also ready to go into rapid production mode when events occur
- Carry out additional experiments to evaluate how successful is the existing attribution now done as part of climate services activities

Review Process?

- Big issue. Needs discussion.
- Some think we should not be afraid to put info out there; don't over-control it.
- Wiki idea? For insiders, controlled, enable colleagues to provide feedback.
- Need for coordination so there are not different messages coming out from different parts of the same agency etc.