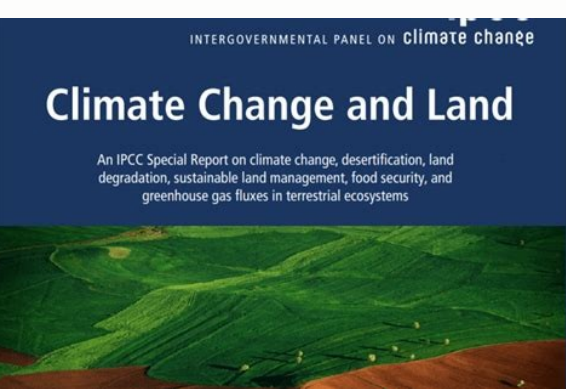


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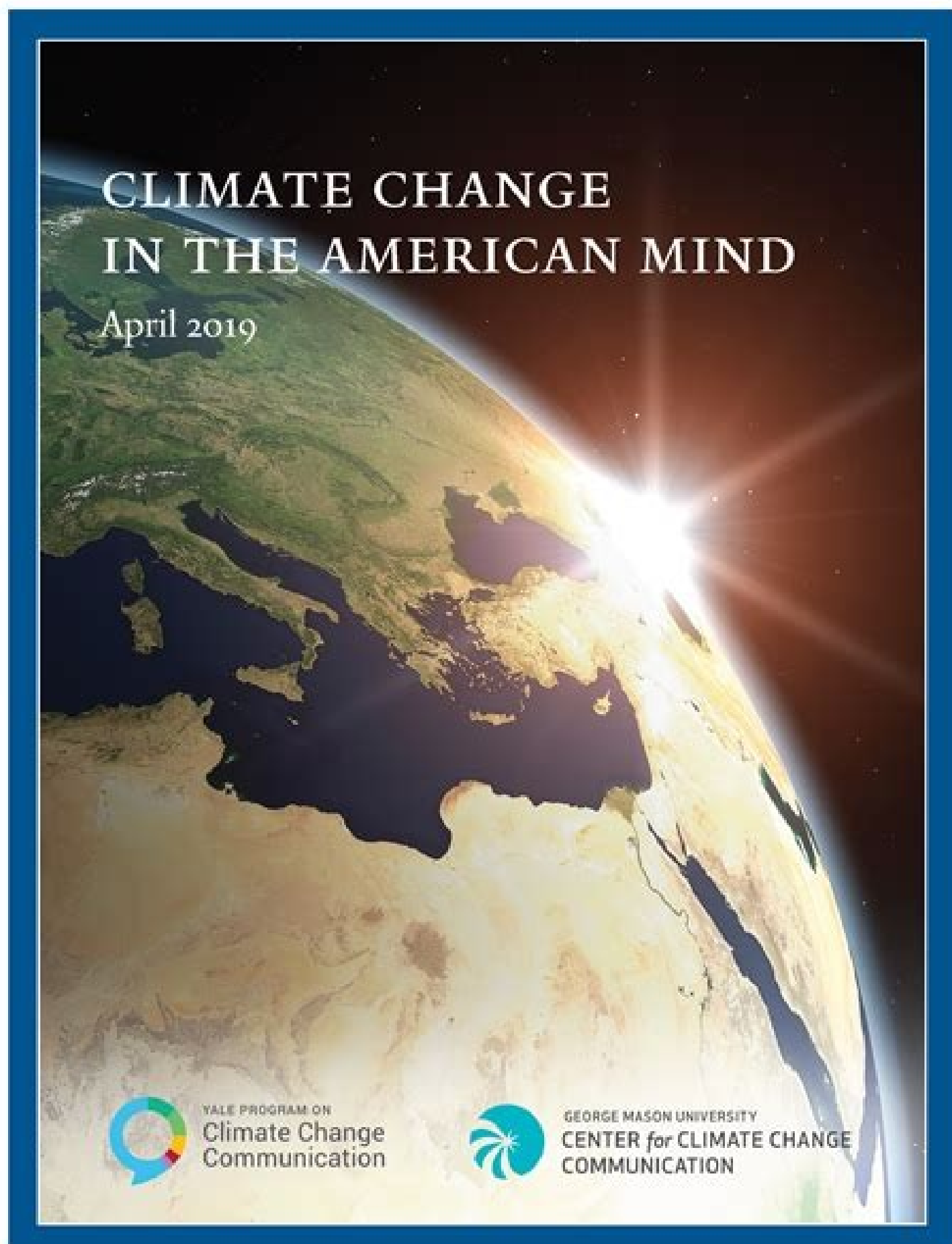


Climate change plan

2015/16 – 2019/20



AUDITSCOTLAND



CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN MIND

April 2019

YALE PROGRAM ON Climate Change Communication

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

America's CLIMATE CHOICES

Advancing the Science of Climate Change

A strong, credible body of scientific evidence shows that climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for a broad range of human and natural systems. As decision makers respond to these risks, the nation's scientific enterprise can contribute both by continuing to improve understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change, and by improving and expanding the options available to limit the magnitude of climate change and to adapt to its impacts. To do so, the nation needs a comprehensive, integrated, and flexible climate change research enterprise that is closely linked with action-oriented programs at all levels. Also needed are a comprehensive climate observing system, improved climate models and other analytical tools, investments in human capital, and better linkages between research and decision making.

As a result of the growing recognition that climate change is underway and poses serious risks for both human societies and natural systems, the question that decision makers are asking has expanded from "what is happening" to "what is happening and what can we do to respond?" Scientific research can help answer both of these important questions.

This report, part of the *America's Climate Choices* suite of studies requested by Congress, examines the status of the nation's climate change research efforts and recommends steps to improve and expand current understanding. The report reviews what the scientific community has learned about climate change and its interactions with human and natural systems in 12 areas of interest to decision makers (Box 1). It identifies advances needed to improve the effectiveness of actions taken to respond to climate change—including actions to limit its magnitude and adapt to its impacts—as well as understanding of the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of climate change.

What is Known about Climate Change

Science has made enormous progress toward understanding climate change. As a result, there is a strong, credible body of evidence, based on multiple lines of research, documenting that Earth is warming. Strong evidence also indicates that recent warming is largely caused by human activities, especially the release of greenhouse gases through the burning of fossil fuels. Global warming is closely associated with other climate changes and impacts, including rising sea levels, increases in intense rainfall events,



SOURCE: NASA

Box 1. Areas of Interest to Decision Makers Examined in this Report

- changes in the climate system
- sea level rise and the coastal environment
- freshwater resources
- ecosystems, ecosystem services, and biodiversity
- agriculture and fisheries
- public health
- cities and the built environment
- transportation systems
- energy systems
- solar radiation management
- national and human security
- climate policy

