GAO has released an important report on adaptation. This is a subject that is just beginning to get the attention it deserves.

Key findings:

> The challenges faced by federal, state, and local officials in their efforts to adapt fell into three categories, based on GAO's analysis of questionnaire results, site visits, and available studies. First, competing priorities make it difficult to pursue adaptation efforts when there may be more immediate needs for attention and resources. For example, about 71 percent (128 of 180) of the officials who responded to our questionnaire rated "non-adaptation activities are higher priorities" as very or extremely challenging. Second, a lack of site-specific data, such as local projections of expected changes, can reduce the ability of officials to manage the effects of climate change. For example, King County officials noted that they are not sure how to translate climate data into effects on salmon recovery. Third, adaptation efforts are constrained by a lack of clear roles and responsibilities among federal, state, and local agencies. Of particular note, about 70 percent (124 of 178) of the respondents rated the "lack of clear roles and responsibilities for addressing adaptation across all levels of government" as very or extremely challenging.

I've posted previously about the federalism issues relating to adaptation. Uncertainty issues are also daunting, and although the models are getting better, it's not at all clear that those uncertainties will be resolved any time soon. We can learn something about how to handle them in the planning process by considering the issues that have arisen under NEPA regarding uncertainty (which have not been handled well.) Look here for a previous post on that.