

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Community Resilience

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
NGO	Definition from Wikipedia on education - society deliberately transmits its knowledge from one generation to another. No one is talking about definition of education. Disappointed about the lack of focus from both NRDA and GCERTF on environmental education. All problems are due to failing to educate the communities surrounding us. In Iowa, big idea: 1-5% given to projects based on 1) definition of environmental education (the continuum) and stewardship, and 2) meet the definition of NOAA meaningful watershed experiences. Recommends 1-5% of monies be spent on environmental literacy programs -- huge need for environmental education program.
NGO	Strategy needs to focus on environmental education (need definition). Outreach is not the same as environmental education. We need kids outside and learning. It is good for business and communities, and makes us resilient. If you look at national allocations of money on both west and east coasts, it is tremendous for environmental education. In Gulf coast states it has been underfunded by federal leaders. Need adequate funding to educate ourselves about our resources.
NGO	The Gulf of Mexico is an economic driver - tourism, people, fisheries - yet we have had terrible accidents, we are at the end of the water road from many states. Need an environmental education initiative and funding source that is powerfully meaningful to the Gulf. Students from "K through gray" are taken outside by our organization. Our efforts are too tiny to make a difference on its own. Need more funding and more people doing it. A dollar set-aside for environmental education can be spent very well. It is more affordable than restoring oyster reefs. Success would look like a percent allocated for environmental education. One task force topic should be environmental education. Outreach is not education.
General Public	Communities that live around coastal industrial areas are affected by surge tide, by contaminated sediment recirculation, and by disturbed orphan dump sites (oil production sites in gulf or on coast where there is no more production). Need comprehensive review and survey of orphan sites so we know where they are. Many leak and has heard that they are not inspected - they need to be better maintained, need better maintenance requirements. Boats hit well heads, will have problem with leaking seepage. Don't know where it came from.



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General Public	A good idea to streamline project delivery processes, so have preexisting team with connections that can work immediately in a crisis. Would be good to have something based on anticipated community needs assessment, so folks can anticipate what will be needed, so we don't have a 2-3 month start up during a crisis but can be organized right away.
General Public	Also, EJ is a cornerstone of Administrator Jackson's, and Al Armandariz talks about it a lot, too. What about regional, local people affected by disaster and who are concerned? Often glossed over if happens at local level. Recommend Agencies most concerned - EPA, NOAA - reach out to EJ community on disaster management, and recovery planning and implementation. Often leave such programs with people that don't have a relationship with the idea - better to leave it with local people that could address it in an EJ manner.
Academia	Grew up on coast of Florida, camping out at night as part of education process. Is in graduate studies now to fix some stuff. A major problem is the definition of resilience - what is it? Where does it come from? Where does it begin. Where do we start to examine ourselves. Requires an acknowledgement of vulnerability - both social and economic vulnerability. There is a disparity between communities wanting to be resilient and yet not wanting to acknowledge vulnerability (e.g. NOAA's resiliency index score).
Academia	We need to identify vulnerabilities. We need to admit that yes we are vulnerable. Having a hard time in community around here as a trainer for CRI, because they don't want to publish it as they would admit that they are vulnerable. Community doesn't want potential members to decide not to move there. Can teach as many kids as we want about risks, cc, but will have generational gap - need their parents to be resilient.
Academia	Need domestic coordination first before international coordination. A huge disparity in ways to deal with isolation issues and auto dominance.
Academia	Need incentives to increase resilience, e.g. break in insurance rates if better decisions are made. Everyone has flood insurance. Need to raise the community rating system to have percentage knocked off flood insurance policy - only way to get folks to do something, only way they will make a decision.



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Academia	Dr. Peacock says there are 12 hazardous mitigation plans that cannot find wetlands and natural systems and barriers. Policy changes are hazardous mitigation plans and plans the only way to get community to help themselves to be more resilient. Need to change planning, coordination and key grass roots definition of "sustainable" and "resilient." Sometimes thinking too large (ice melt, etc...) leads to forgetting about our local communities.
Academia	There are many types of communities. Need to define what we mean by community - faith based, oystermen, shrimpers, etc. Access to them depends upon how closely knit we are with them. WE do community based part. Research where target community works along side us to do the work. So many people have been affected by economic impact. Will community members be a part of the restoration process? Want to be sure it will be possible for communities to be involved in restoration process.
Academia	Working with communities depends on trust -- building trust is an important component of education. Working with communities requires that there is degree of trust between community partners and decision elements being brought to the table. Need to emphasize trust-building component associatd with education and disaster conditions. Need to reinforce that element in policy making decisions.
NGO	Could not rebuild sustainably. Cities want to put people back in their homes, but they were not in resilient homes. Cities didn't want to lose their tax base. There is a lack of understanding on the part of local government - they see their role as getting people home after a disaster. Rather, they should view their role as getting people home to a safer environment than they had prior to the disaster
LGO	Planned obsolescence: concerned that federal funds being used to support obsolete plans, spending money putting things back as they were. Feds should only fund efforts directed towards making things better than they were before. <i>Obsolete Plans</i> versus <i>Restorative Plans</i> . Need planned restoration policy. The funds we got was just to put back what we had. So nothing is getting better.
LGO	There are studies for how we can harden our infrastructure. Funding from feds is dooming the communities that they are funding. The federal government should not be funding repairs unless you go beyond. FEMA maps need to come out right after storms, otherwise we are building under flood elevations because we don't have up to date maps. Feds can mandate. It will not get any b better the way we have it now. People are being put back in harms way.



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Academia	We are required to harden/elevate all buildings in order to get federal money. But we don't have it yet even though it is three years after the storm. Feds, however, work in silos and don't talk among each other. Communication was lacking after hurricane Ike. Government agencies need to work across agencies to be effective and communicate how to help people get the money
General Public	There are different definitions of resilience. Regarding environmental education, need to be strategic. Need to be able to say if restoration is working, need strategic communication component. Success would look like more than environmental education. Need to report on how effective it is, not just implantation.
Business and Industry	Working industry sees a lot of policy. We don't necessarily need to have more policies and guidelines. Rather, we need to change the way we implement current policies and guidelines. There are a lot of restoration plans in place but it seems not many people read those plans. Need to take advantage of tools that are out there.
Business and Industry	For example, with permitting, reporting on success for five years after that. Spend a lot of time getting permit, etc. but not much follow up. No one follows up on wetland permit requirements. Public doesn't know when actions are taken to address the concerns they have raised. Send the public the results of the projects, outcomes back to the public. Not a whole lot of funds. Lets change how we do things not concentrate on big programs but focus on implementation what we have.
NGO	Need to note the issue of illness in the Gulf of Mexico from oil spill. Understand GCERTF is not responsible, but want to bring up because we want a Task Force specifically dedicated to health, we don't have that yet.
NGO	Concerned with issues of land use - elephant in room is decimation of wetlands by industry. Look at what industry is doing, look at what people have lost in last few decades. Need incentives to put lands in trust - major industries have the money to do that. They don't use land well. Need incentives so people will put property into trusts.
NGO	Concerned about fishermen, looking at other spills, we can see that fishermen will be in trouble for quite a while. We need to get those fishermen retrained to have opportunity for jobs first.



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General Public	Talk about getting funding from feds: why should we expect feds to bail us out for our own stupidity? "We have met the enemy and he is us." Concerned that local governments don't want to recognize risks or current flood maps. City councils want development. Local governments approve subdivisions where it is not safe to build. They need to hire someone to do threat risk assessments, but most don't have that money and would not like the answer they would get. So they don't do it. Galveston does not want to recognize new flood plain because it limits development.
General Public	Sooner or later we have to recognize that living along the coast carries its own risk. In the past it was likely o.k. when homes were affected by a hurricane, the homes were elevated. Now people expect FEMA to come in and make them whole. People have to engage in their own personal risk assessments. If they see the risks of living on coast, they may leave, and coastal properties could go back to nature.
General Public	We are a waterside industry - don't need saltwater, but need shipping for our raw materials.
NGO	There are a lot of sick people on the gulf because of industry and oil spill. We want to restore people and environment in holistic way. Most nutrients and runoff are from farming in other states - but runoff is not treated as industrial source. Need to treat farmers as industrial organizations. Only then can we address the hypoxic zone. People vote for green space bonds, such as in California. Lack of accountability on part of farmers putting things into running into Mississippi river.
General Public	Communities are different - Galveston wouldn't change building codes after Ike, but Miami Dade did so after Andrew. Sustainability - we need to build on sustainable principles (economy, people, and ecosystems); sustainable practices will result in resilient communities.
Academia	FEMA in debt to U.S. treasury by \$25 million. Would like to see sharing of ideas in communities, lessons learned from past experiences (e.g. storm damage). For a resilient community, need to build on sustainable principles. Can't just have a resilient community, need to make long term decisions based on those principles.



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General Public	When I think of resiliency I don't want better armor, or to live in 20 foot high house. Bigger issue is that storms are larger, stronger, and will keep getting worse. Bigger issue/problem is to address those bigger issues first (climate change, etc.). If we do not, we will be living on boat houses on the coast. Hope to have county commissioner willing to push smarter ideas. All of us need to think about how to address industry with regard to destroying natural habitat. The farming industry is whole-country problem, but folks on coast deal with it more than the rest of the country. We are affected by snows in the north by flooding.
NGO	Maybe we should give up and have a big party.
General Public	It would be nice if people had a handle on how to assess their risk.
NGO	We are concerned with work force development. We are looking at a project in the oysterman association to take 10 fisherman to transition them to coastal restoration jobs. Used model from Detroit -- it was costing city \$500K to pick up tree branches. The city gave a guy who approached them a warehouse, and he started picking up branches. Now he has 20 trucks and makes a lot of money doing it. That is thinking out of the box, for fishermen if they have a chance to participate. Fishermen do several things pretty well, e.g. mechanics, welding. For coastal restoration, welding will be an important part of the program.
NGO	We saw 4 phases for the money coming to gulf coast for restoration for Katrina. We haven't even spent the money yet. Need money, facilities to train, now oxfam is working on a small program to train people for 'green jobs.' Putting people back to work for fisherman on the coast.
NGO	In the long term education is needed but not the task force to do that. We need to talk to people in our own community.
NGO	I got money to raise house and decided to do it, because it was federal money (got twice what it costs). This way it will be resellable and can make a profit because people who might buy in the future will look at this house being resilient by being elevated.
NGO	Want governor of Louisiana to call John and say that this is the first project that we are doing - but it is not going to happen. We need education from the ground up. There is no politician with the ability to make a project like this happen. Need to let our folks know what is going on.



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General Public	How can you live below the poverty line? How can we have refinery upgrade/ expansion in Port Arthur for \$10 billion? How can these mayors let something like this happen in area with highest unemployment rate? We are surrounded by 8-10 refineries, looking at \$12 billion upgrades, but we have over 16% unemployment. Industry is using Port Arthur and money is leaving Port Arthur, not there for the people. The community is overlooked.
NGO	I moved from Florida keys and moved to Texas and saw my first refineries. I didn't know where my oil land gas came from. You have Florida and you have 4 Gulf coast states that operate differently from rest of the nation . We have extreme poverty and lowest ranking universities in the country. It is not like the Chesapeake Bay. Obama asked for you to take a good look at the coast. We have been treated like the third coast for along time. Everybody from here to Canada has to participate - like saving the whooping crane.
General Public	The coast is in a degenerate state, we are incapable of resilience. These things have long term health effects.
Academia	If the Task Force has authority with Army Corps of Engineers, it should make EJ component should be part of project assessment. Who would have authority over that?
Business and Industry	See a lot of finger pointing on industry. A lot of pollution is from communities with impervious surfaces, contributed by residential developers. Would like to see change in focus to bring in residential developers. Shell and BP are not doing all the