

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



ADAPTATION COMMUNICATIONS:

An Overview of the Research and Practice

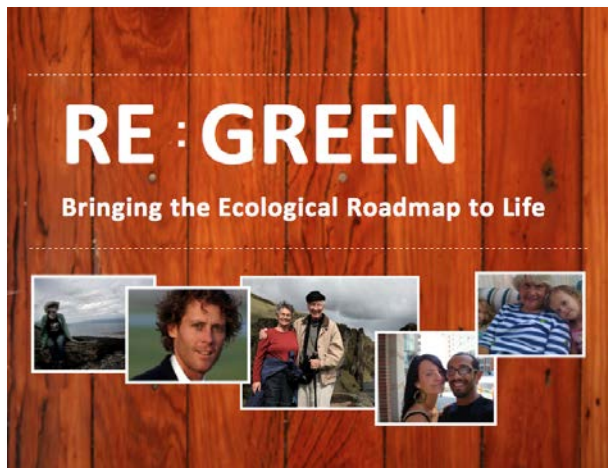
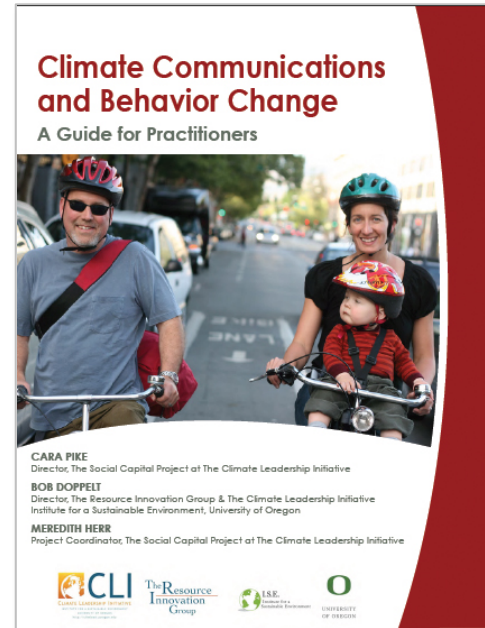
CARA PIKE

Director, the Social Capital Project of The Resource Innovation Group
and Climate Access

Achieving Buy-In for Adaptation – March 21, 2013

EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program webinar

+ THE SOCIAL CAPITAL PROJECT



www.climateaccess.org



The network for those engaging the public in the transformation to low-carbon, resilient communities.

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Extreme weather is influencing public opinion on climate change.

The Fall 2012 National Surveys on Energy and Environment

National surveys conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College before and after Superstorm Sandy explore how personal experiences of weather events affect public perceptions of global warming.

[Read more](#)

1,400+ members

across 42 countries,
primarily US & Canada

NGO: 56%

GOV: 19%

EDU: 17%

Service: 8%

BLOG

March 18, 2013

The National Climate Assessment – Why You Should Provide Comments

Missy Stults

As you may have heard, the draft 2013 U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA) is currently out for public review and comment. But you may be asking yourself, what is this document, and why should I participate in the review period? Let's start with "why" you should become a reviewer of the NCA.

[0 comments](#)
[Read more](#)

FEATURED EVENT



Achieving Buy-In for Adaptation: EPA webinar

March 21, 1-2:30pm EDT

The first webcast in a three part mini-series "Climate Change Adaptation for State and Local Governments", hosted by EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program. [Learn more and register](#)

7 reasons why the public is not engaged on climate AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT ▶

FROM THE BLOGOSPHERE



Millennials, Change, and Outlook for Climate Activism and Coverage

John Wihbey
March 14, 2013



Climate change and consequences on

Top areas of member expertise:

- Communications
- Policy
- Energy

+ COMMUNICATING CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND PREPARATION

Literature Review and Polling Summary

- Reviewed more than 85 articles from scholarly journals and trade publications from 2007-present
- Analyzed findings from more than 70 polls from 2007-present





Related Fields of Social Science

- Behavioral science
- Communications
- Development studies
- Behavioral Economics
- Environmental studies
- Political science
- Psychology

+ Adaptation Comes Home

The Adaptation Conversation Has Begun

- Adaptation versus mitigation debate is largely over.
- The emphasis is no longer on climate adaptation in developing countries.
- The field of adaptation research is starting to grow.



+ The Mitigation-Adaptation Intersection

Mitigation + Adaptation

- Interrelationships between mitigation and adaptation as joint climate response strategies.
- Greater integration is needed so mitigation and adaptation complement rather than substitute.
- Understanding of adaptation can lead to heightened interest in mitigation but more on the ground examples are needed.



+ Linking Extreme Weather to Climate

Storms and Growing Seasons

- Americans are making the connection between extreme weather events and climate.
- Motivated reasoning and experiential learning are in affect.
- Reactive and proactive adaptation: responding to impacts vs. mitigation and technological innovation.
- Direct impacts do not have to be experienced or extreme to motivate concern.



+ Addressing Uncertainty

Risk Perception

- “Adaptive management”: decision-making framework that embraces uncertainty.
- Risk perception plays a key role in adaptation communications.
- Successful risk communication depends on recognizing uncertainty.
- “Insurance” frame resonates with public to prepare and protect communities.

“Some people may disagree with the science of global warming, but we can all agree that taking steps to make our communities better prepared to deal with drought.”



+ The Preparation Frame

Being prepared is the right thing to do.

- “Preparation” or preparing for climate impacts/extreme weather events have traction.
- Preparation sounds proactive, hopeful and can bridge to “climate disruption” over time.
- People may not accept global warming, but will still take steps to prepare.

Climate preparation allows for alternative framing around health, safety, prosperity.



+ Vulnerability and Resilience

Community Well-Being

- Vulnerable populations are often disproportionately susceptible to impacts due to socio-economics.
- “Equitable adaptation” as a response to justice concerns.
- Resilience: ability for systems to cope with climate impacts.
- Need for public health system to improve resilience and increase “adaptive capacity”.
- Protecting local resources, such as public health and water, is seen as an important action.



Perceived Importance of Protecting Local Resources



The federal government is encouraging communities to prepare for the impacts of global warming so that people and property are protected. How important do you think it is for your community to take steps to protect the following from global warming?

		National Average	Alarmed (12%)	Concerned (27%)	Cautious (25%)	Disengaged (10%)	Doubtful (15%)	Dismissive (10%)
The water supply	<i>Extremely important</i>	36	69	54	30	26	11	7
	<i>Very important</i>	26	21	30	36	33	21	4
	<i>Somewhat important</i>	18	3	10	25	21	33	13
	<i>Not too important</i>	6	0	4	3	1	17	14
	<i>Not at all important</i>	9	1	0	3	5	14	54
	<i>Does not apply to my community</i>	5	6	2	4	14	4	8
The public's health	<i>Extremely important</i>	33	66	48	28	27	10	5
	<i>Very important</i>	29	22	38	37	34	20	5
	<i>Somewhat important</i>	19	9	10	26	22	34	14
	<i>Not too important</i>	7	0	3	3	1	19	17
	<i>Not at all important</i>	9	0	0	3	4	15	54
	<i>Does not apply to my community</i>	3	3	0	4	12	2	5
Agriculture	<i>Extremely important</i>	33	66	50	25	28	11	5
	<i>Very important</i>	29	22	37	41	28	17	3
	<i>Somewhat important</i>	17	4	9	23	20	32	14
	<i>Not too important</i>	6	3	1	3	4	21	14
	<i>Not at all important</i>	9	0	0	3	4	13	55
	<i>Does not apply to my community</i>	6	6	3	5	15	6	9

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Caution in conveying impacts

“Mad Max”



Impacts projected
into the future



“Realistic Hope”



Direct, local
impacts



RECOMMENDATIONS:

2. Building from extreme weather to action

- Link storms to larger trends and climate disruption
- Highlight record setting events, frequency and severity
- Tie to solutions and benefits



RECOMMENDATIONS:

3. Tap Values

- Safe, prosperous communities
- Prevention pays
- Readiness
- Better future
- Health and well-being



+ FRAMING CONSIDERATIONS:



- Urgency is lost when impacts are projected into the future.

Need to emphasize near-time consequences with supporting facts when possible.

- Avoid triggering protectionist or anti-immigration views.

Emphasize collective action.

- Adaptation is a long-term issue where success is not obvious.

Set milestones and avoid the idea that we can put an end to global warming.



Contact Us



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