

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA'S COLLABORATION NETWORK NEWS



"Public Involvement brings the pieces together"

Winter 2009

Welcome to the thirteenth volume of *Network News*! The new administration is underway in the midst of severe global economic flux. During these times, our work reminds us how it is possible to maintain civil dialogue and rational decision making under historically unprecedented conditions.

In this issue there are several items about the federal actions on citizen engagement and collaboration, including President Obama's memo on government transparency and excerpts from the opening memo to employees from EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson. Other experts weigh in with their analysis, too. Our illustrated feature, "Engaging Coastal North Carolinians on Sea Level Rise and Population Growth," offers a timely example of how collaborative methods can help us holistically face a series of difficult issues.

Pat and Leanne

In This Issue:

- Read President Obama's Presidential Memo on Transparency and Open Government
- Submit a workshop proposal for EPA's 2009 Community Involvement Conference & Training by February 20, 2009
- Learn from "Engaging Coastal North Carolinians on Sea Level Rise Population Growth"



Events:

The Future of Environmental Public Health- February 25-26, Washington, DC
Centers for Disease Control Tracking Conference
<http://www.blsm meetings.net/cdctrackingconference/index.htm>

National Institutes of Health Federal Environmental Symposia - June 2009
<http://www.fedcenter.gov/calendar/conferences/symposia2009/>

No Better Time: Promising Opportunities in Deliberative Democracy for Educators and Practitioners - July 8-11, Durham, NH (The Democracy Initiative & Deliberative Democracy Consortium) <http://www.unh.edu/democracy/conference2009>

Innovations in Collaboration & Conflict Resolution - July 29-31, Austin, TX
http://www.utexas.edu/law/academics/centers/cppdr/training/skills_enrichment.php

EPA Community Involvement Conference & Training - August 18-20, Seattle, WA
<http://www.epa.gov/ciconference/#help>

International Association for Public Participation - September 18-23, San Diego, CA <http://iap2.org/displayconvention.cfm>



What's New:

EPA Community Involvement Conference & Training
<http://www.epa.gov/ciconference/#help>

The eleventh Community Involvement Training Conference will be held August 18-20, 2009, in Seattle, Washington. The theme for the 2009 conference is, "Reaching across Boundaries: Sharing Challenges and Opportunities." The theme acknowledges that boundaries exist all around us and can pose challenges to effectively solving environmental problems. However, if stakeholders can move across boundaries, they can identify mutual challenges and opportunities that can lead to sustainable environmental benefits. During the conference we will explore communication skills and processes, organizational/institutional issues and behavioral shifts as ways to reach across boundaries to achieve these environmental benefits. The Call for Proposals to present workshops and training is @

http://www.epa.gov/ciconference/cfp_instructions.htm **Submittals are due February 20.**

Certification Training for the Working Together Collaboration Workshop

EPA will sponsor a third train-the-trainer session to certify individuals to facilitate "Working Together: An Introduction to Collaborative Decision Making" in Washington, DC from May 19-21. A panel of nine people will select not more than 27 people; approximately one-third of the slots may be filled by other federal, state, tribal and local government representatives who apply. View the application form and a workshop flyer at <http://www.epa.gov/ncei/collaboration/index.htm>. **The application forms are due March 31, 2009,** to bonner.patricia@epa.gov. Contact her for further details.

Rachel Carson "Sense of Wonder" Contest entries due June 10, 2009

EPA invites the public to submit creative projects to the 3rd annual Rachel Carson intergenerational "Sense of Wonder" contest. There are four categories: photography, essay, poetry and dance. Dance is a new category this year. The contest seeks to spur and instill the same sense of wonder Carson had among all generations. EPA is working with the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Generations United, and the Rachel Carson Council, Inc. to sponsor this contest.

Carson is considered to be the founder of the contemporary environmental movement through her landmark book, *Silent Spring*. Its publication is credited with reversing the nation's pesticide policy.

Winners will be announced in September 2009. For more detailed information on the contest, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm>
 Contacts: Enesta Jones, 202-564-4355/7873, jones.enesta@epa.gov and Kathy Sykes, 202-564-3651, sykes.kathy@epa.gov

Achievement in Environmental Justice Awards

EPA is accepting applications for the 2009 Achievement in Environmental Justice Awards from multi-stakeholder partnerships for their achievement in addressing environmental justice issues or achieving the goals of environmental justice in a manner that results in positive impacts to a community. The partnerships must be made up of three or more of the following organizations: community-based (required), academia, business and industry, non-governmental and environmental, state and local government, tribal government and indigenous groups. Each multi-stakeholder partnership applying for an award must have reached a significant environmental justice milestone or accomplishment within the past 5 years (2004-2008). EPA will announce award winners this Fall. Nominations must be postmarked by May 13, 2009. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Lisa Hammond at (202) 564-0736 or at hammond.lisa@epa.gov. For the application, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/awards/2009-ej-awards-flyer.pdf>

Free Range Thinking is on line --

The 113th edition of *free-range thinking* is the first issue in electronic form <http://www.agoodmanonline/newsletter/index.html>. The editor is looking for reactions to the new format and to wants your feedback. Future issues, like those past, will offer a blend of case studies, recommended reading, and other tips to improve your communications, but with more concision and a greater variety of topics each month. Comments should be sent to andy@agoodmanonline.com,

CARE (Community Action for a Renewed Environment) RFP Is Online

Find the RFP at: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html#0902 About \$3 million will be available in 2009 to support community-based partnerships to reduce pollution at the local level through the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program.

This year the application time line is almost 3 months and the **deadline is March 16, 2009**. Additional information about the CARE program, previous cooperative agreement recipients, the RFP, including the upcoming Q&A Webcasts, is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/care>

The CARE program will conduct national information sessions for cooperative agreement applicants via national Internet seminars or webcasts:

February 24, 2009	12:30 - 2:00 p.m. eastern time
February 27, 2009	10:00 – 11:30 a.m. eastern time

To register for the upcoming CARE Internet Seminar for either of the above dates, please go to: <http://www.cluin.org/studio/seminar.cfm>

EPA anticipates awarding CARE cooperative agreements in two levels. Level I cooperative agreements range from \$75,000 to \$100,000 and will help establish community-based partnerships to develop local environmental priorities. Level II awards, ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000 each, will support communities which have established broad-based partnerships, have identified the priority toxic risks in the community, and are prepared to measure results, implement risk reduction activities, and become self-sustaining.

In 2008, \$2.7 million in cooperative agreements were made available to more than 18 communities through the CARE program, a community-based, community-driven program that builds partnerships to help the public understand and reduce toxic risks from numerous sources. Examples of projects include addressing abandoned, contaminated industrial and residential properties in Gary, Ind., dealing with agriculture-related toxics in Yakima County, Wash., and reducing air emissions from diesel trucks and buses in Woonsocket, R.I. Since 2005, the grants to reduce toxics in the environment have reached over 60 communities in over 30 states.

Eligible applicants include county and local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations and universities.

State EJ Cooperative Agreement RFP available on the Web

EPA's Office of Environmental Justice is pleased to announce the State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreements (SEJCA) Program. A Request for Proposals (RFP) document is available on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Website. The application period opens on February 12, 2009 and closes on April 10, 2009. State governments are eligible to submit one application each for the \$160,000, 3-year cooperative agreements. For further details check

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants/index.html> and <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/grants/rfa-state-grant-2-12-09.pdf>

New for Applicants for any EPA Grants

EPA has a new [Web-based training page](#) designed to help non-profit recipients of EPA grants and cooperative agreements (grants or grant agreements) manage their grants in

a manner that meets the highest management and fiduciary standards and furthers the agency's mission of protecting human health and the environment.

Cooperative Conservation MOU Launched

Leaders of the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense and EPA have signed an interagency Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Partnership for Cooperative Conservation. The agreement establishes a framework for federal agencies to increase collaboration with each other and with other public, private and non-profit entities in natural resources and environmental management. Full text of the agreement is online at <http://www.epa.gov/whcc/partnershipforccmou.pdf>

OMB and CEQ Issue Environmental Conflict Resolution Report

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) have released the second annual analysis of the federal departments' and agencies' Environmental Conflict Resolution (ECR) Reports. The report summarizes the ECR work being done by the federal departments and agencies in response to the November 2005 Joint Memorandum on Environmental Conflict Resolution issued by OMB and CEQ.

The report highlights the importance of training to federal departments' and agencies' efforts to build institutional capacity for ECR. The U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution is recognized for its efforts to make ECR a more familiar and used tool for resolving environmental conflicts.

In the report, U.S. Institute trainings highlighted include:

- Conflict management trainings provided on behalf of the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence (NCE) as part of its efforts to develop negotiation, collaboration, and problem-solving skills as core competencies throughout the Air Force.
- Collaborative skills orientations to prepare stakeholders to participate in a National Park Service negotiated rulemaking to address off-road vehicle use on the Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina.
- Customized training in multiparty negotiations provided at the request of the Department of Defense as part of its sustainable military readiness efforts, and at the request of the Department of Interior's Office of the Solicitor and its Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR).

The full report is online at

<http://ecr.gov/Resources/FederalECRPolicy/AnnualECRReport.aspx>.

Public Agenda Choicework Discussion Starter on Climate Change

Scientists warn that the human activity is causing changes in the climate, with potentially disastrous effects for humans and the planet. How can we address the problem of climate change? This Choicework Discussion Starter can help you examine different arguments about the best way to face the challenges of climate change. The file is online at: <http://publicagenda.org/pages/choicework-discussion-starters>

Citizen Surveys for Local Government Make A Difference

The International City/County Management Association says citizen surveys are easy to do and understand—their structured reports showing resident opinion in specific categories make them easy for staff and lay audiences to understand. The challenge is putting citizen survey results to work improving performance and efficiency.

Learn more online at: <http://www.icma.org>

Six Universities Awarded Grants to Build Cadre of Community-Engaged Faculty

Faculty for the Engaged Campus is pleased to announce that six universities are being funded to design, implement and evaluate innovative community-engaged faculty development programs. Each grant is for \$15,000 over a two year period. The six institutions were among twenty that attended the May 2008 charette. To view the press release click http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/fec-pressrelease-012109.pdf

Presidential Transition: New President Gives New Look to WhiteHouse.gov

At 12:01 pm on Tuesday, January 20, a message was posted to the official website of the White House, WhiteHouse.gov, reflecting the priorities and agenda of the 44th President of the United States.

The administration posted its agenda for 23 topics, ranging from civil rights immigration to women. The technology agenda included a section on 'creating a transparent and connected democracy' that mentions the appointment of a Chief Technology Officer:

- *Use technology to reform government and improve the exchange of information between the federal government and citizens while ensuring the security of our networks.*
- *Appoint the nation's first Chief Technology Officer (CTO) to ensure the safety of our networks and lead an interagency effort, working with chief technology and chief information officers of each of the federal agencies, to ensure that they use best-in-class technologies and share best practices.*

WhiteHouse.gov boasts a new design and promises to have more features that help citizens interact with government than previous versions of the site. The administration outlined three priorities for its online programs: communication, transparency and participation.

The administration says it will post all non-emergency legislation to the website for five days so the public can review and comment before the President signs it.

A few features of the website include:

- A '[Briefing Room](#)' section will have information about the President's events and public statements, with photos, video, blogs, proclamations, executive orders and press releases.
- Citizens can sign up to receive [RSS feeds](#) from the [blog](#) or [e-mail updates](#) from the administration.
- A '[Contact Us](#)' section allows citizens to e-mail questions, comments, concerns or well-wishes to the President and his staff.

To subscribe to the General Service Administration's DotGovBuzz e-newsletter, e-mail dotgovbuzz@gsa.gov [This item came from DotGovBuzz.]



Featured Articles

Obama Administration Pledges Open, Transparent Government

President Barack Obama's memo on transparency and Open Government signals a new era in aligning public work with public trust. The full text of the memo follows:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Transparency and Open Government

My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.

Government should be transparent. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing. Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset. My Administration will take appropriate action, consistent with law and policy, to disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can readily find and use. Executive departments and agencies should harness new technologies to put information about their operations and decisions online and readily available to the public. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public feedback to identify information of greatest use to the public.

Government should be participatory. Public engagement enhances the Government's effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions. Knowledge is widely dispersed in society, and public officials benefit from having access to that dispersed knowledge. Executive departments and agencies should offer Americans increased opportunities to participate in policymaking and to provide their Government with the benefits of their collective expertise and information. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public input on how we can increase and improve opportunities for public participation in Government.

Government should be collaborative. Collaboration actively engages Americans in the work of their Government. Executive departments and agencies should use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all levels of Government, and with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector. Executive departments and agencies should solicit public feedback to assess and improve their level of collaboration and to identify new opportunities for cooperation.

I direct the Chief Technology Officer, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Administrator of General Services, to

coordinate the development by appropriate executive departments and agencies, within 120 days, of recommendations for an Open Government Directive, to be issued by the Director of OMB, that instructs executive departments and agencies to take specific actions implementing the principles set forth in this memorandum. The independent agencies should comply with the Open Government Directive.

This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

This memorandum shall be published in the Federal Register.

BARACK OBAMA

EPA Administrator's First Memo to Employees

In concert with president Obama's memo on transparency and open government, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson pledged to EPA employees that she will conduct agency business based on science as the backbone, following the rule of law and making operations transparent as EPA fulfills its environmental mission. Her January 23, 2009 memo places strong emphasis on supporting environmental justice. Excerpts follow:

- On transparency

"I embrace this philosophy. Public trust in the Agency demands that we reach out to all stakeholders fairly and impartially, that we consider the views and data presented carefully and objectively, and that we fully disclose the information that forms the bases for our decisions. I pledge that we will carry out the work of the Agency in public view so that the door is open to all interested parties and that there is no doubt why we are acting and how we arrived at our decisions."

- On environmental justice

"We must take special pains to connect with those who have been historically underrepresented in EPA decision making, including the disenfranchised in our cities and rural areas, communities of color, native Americans, people disproportionately impacted by pollution, and small businesses, cities and towns working to meet their environmental responsibilities. Like all Americans, they deserve an EPA with an open mind, a big heart and a willingness to listen."

"...we must be sensitive to the burdens pollution has placed on vulnerable subpopulations, including children, the elderly, the poor and all others who are at particular risk to threats to health and the environment. We must seek their full partnership in the greater aim of identifying and eliminating the sources of pollution in their neighborhoods, schools and homes."

- On her priorities

"Many vital tasks lie before us in every aspect of EPA's programs. As I develop my agenda, I will be seeking your guidance on the tasks that are most urgent in protecting public health and the environment and on the strategies that EPA can adopt to maximize our effectiveness and the expertise of our talented employees. She highlighted five priorities that will receive her personal attention:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improving air quality
- Managing chemical risks
- Cleaning up hazardous-waste sites
- Protecting America's water"

Engaging Coastal North Carolinians on Sea Level Rise and Population Growth

By

Lucy Roberts Henry, a watershed management coordinator with the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program in the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Background

North Carolina's population is growing at an unprecedented rate. By 2050, the population is expected to increase by more than 50 percent. Many new residents are moving to North Carolina's beautiful, but delicate coastal and estuarine region, where retirement and vacation communities are sprouting up on land that was once farm and forest. North Carolina has already started to experience the effects of sea level rise. The Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds region has been identified as one of the top three most threatened areas from sea level rise in the United States. The combined impact of population growth and sea level rise has created a condition of ecological and social vulnerability that calls for holistic solutions that respond to social and ecological concerns.



Natural resource managers have begun to develop strategies for ecological adaptation to sea level rise, such as preserving natural areas along the coast to buffer against rising

seas, thereby allowing plants and animals to migrate slowly inland. Residents of the coastal plain face more immediate economic and social concerns. The Albemarle-Pamlico watershed has some of the poorest counties in the state and the loss of traditional industries such as fishing and farming, as well as a decline in manufacturing, are contributing to rising unemployment and changes in local culture. At the same time, the appeal of North Carolina's Outer Banks is drawing people to the shores of the sounds and rivers inland, which are being marketed as the "inner banks."



Despite the apparent disconnect between the issues of population growth and sea level rise, the threats they pose to

communities are intertwined. Development is mostly occurring in high-risk areas, along the banks of the sounds and rivers, and eventually coastal communities will have to make difficult decisions about whether they want to put resources into protecting this infrastructure. In order to gain a better understanding of how residents perceive the threats from sea level rise and population growth, and what their priorities are in adapting to them, a series of public listening sessions was held during the summer of 2008. The desired outcome of these sessions was to have a written record of public opinions that could inform conservation and community development in the future.

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program [APNEP] and the Albemarle-Pamlico Conservation and Communities Collaborative [AP3C] hosted these listening sessions. Their approach was to share basic information about population growth and sea level rise, but more importantly to listen to community members' reactions and suggested strategies. The focus of the sessions was on listening and recording community members' opinions and priorities. The meetings took place in seven communities on the coastal plain of North Carolina, targeted for their vulnerability to sea level rise and their diverse populations and landscapes.

Goals of the Listening Sessions

In an attempt to focus the sessions on local issues and to avoid getting into a broad discussion about the causes and effects of climate change, we focused specifically on the issue of sea level rise. We had the following three specific goals:

- 1) To provide participants with basic information about sea level rise and population growth in the Albemarle-Pamlico region.
- 2) To give participants an opportunity to share their concerns about the potential impacts of sea level rise and population growth on their communities.
- 3) To generate potential solutions that could address impacts resulting from sea level rise and population growth.

Site Selection

We held seven listening sessions throughout the Albemarle-Pamlico region. The sites were selected in specific locations to encourage diverse participation and maximize the access, so regional residents would be able to attend at least one of the sessions.

The sessions were held in the following North Carolina locations: July 17 - Washington; July 21 - Engelhard; July 22 - Columbia; Aug. 4 - Elizabeth City; Aug. 5 - Edenton; Aug. 11 - New Bern; and Aug. 18 - Manteo.

Outreach and Publicity Strategy

We used a multi-pronged approach for recruiting people to attend the listening sessions. At each of the seven sites an outreach person:

- mailed flyers to potential participants, then made follow-up telephone calls to them;
- disseminated outreach flyers to local churches;
- requested coverage by local media;
- invited local elected leadership, schoolteachers and chamber representatives; and
- coordinated meals and scheduled a venue for the meeting.

Although the outreach person was a volunteer, we did provide funding for postage and food. The person responsible for outreach targeted councils of government, the N.C. Rural Center, the N.C. Community Development Initiative and the N.C. Association of Community Development Corporations to encourage Community Development Corporations and their constituents to attend the focus groups.

AP3C partners and APNEP staff e-mailed announcements about the listening sessions to their networks and contacts. Before the listening sessions, several AP3C partners were interviewed for radio interviews and newspaper articles.

Setting the Agenda

Meetings were held from 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. to accommodate residents whose work schedules would not allow them to attend daytime meetings. Because the meetings

were held during dinner, food was served as an incentive for people to attend. The agenda was divided into five distinct parts to accomplish specific goals: **Opening**, **Setting the Context**, **Implications**, **Solutions**, and **Next Steps**.

In the **Opening**, we welcomed participants, introduced the conveners and participants to each other, and provided a little education about the Albemarle-Pamlico Conservation and Communities Collaborative and the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program.

We used facilitated open discussion to structure the remainder of the agenda because adults learn best when they actively participate in the process and when connections are established between new learning and relevant prior knowledge and experience. Summarized comments were recorded on flip charts and in more detailed written notes.

To **Set the Context** for our discussion, we asked the group to respond to the question: *"What changes are you seeing and experiencing in your communities or your environment?"* Starting from this context was important for later discussion about sea level rise and population growth, so that participants could draw on their own experiences and relate the issue to their communities and environment.

Next, we shared maps illustrating projected sea level rise and population growth. We displayed poster-sized maps showing these events at the scale of the entire region and provided participants with 8 ½-by-11-inch local maps of the area where the session was being held. At the final session, Sam Pearsall, then a scientist with The Nature Conservancy and now with Environmental Defense Fund, made a power point presentation on sea level rise and projected population growth. At the other sessions, we deliberately avoided overwhelming participants with information and used visuals with a brief explanation to stimulate discussion. The merits and trade-offs of these two different approaches is discussed in a later section.

Next, we discussed the **Implications** of what had been shared up to that point. In other words, given the actual changes people are experiencing in their communities and the projected sea level rise and population increases that are anticipated, we asked them to brainstorm what might be some of the impacts of a convergence of all of those factors.

We then asked for potential **Solutions** to the issues identified in the implications conversation. In the information packet, we provided a handout of some of the adaptation strategies being used by other communities in order to stimulate conversation as well as case studies of sea level rise adaptation. In the design, we anticipated that the responses would address a full range of issues and decided that we would offer some general suggestions if participants found the subject too overwhelming to come up with solutions. However, participants at all of the sessions did not hesitate with solutions, so the facilitators had little influence over the responses.

Finally, we ended each session by discussing **Next Steps**. Participants were reminded to complete the sign-in sheet indicating their contact information, and whether they wanted to be informed about future AP3C meetings and listening session findings. We felt it was important to give participants an opportunity to stay engaged and feel that their opinions were part of an ongoing process. We also conducted verbal and written evaluations (with the exception of our first session) in order to improve subsequent sessions.

Maps

Maps are in a separate document because they increased the size of the issue file dramatically. To view, click

http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/mapstoillustratenc_article.htm

During the listening sessions, participants' comments were recorded both on flip charts, as summarized statements, and in more detailed written notes that included direct quotes. Comments were grouped according to the three questions that were presented in the sessions: 1) "What changes are you seeing and experiencing in your communities and in your environment?" 2) "What do you think the impacts of these changes will be on your community, as they relate to sea level rise and population growth?" and 3) "What do you think are some of the solutions to these issues?" The transcript of the sessions was coded, using qualitative analysis, first according to location, then according to major themes, and then according to sub-themes. These coded results were then analyzed for major patterns, ideas, commonalities and contrasts.

Between 10 and 30 participants attended each session. The average number of participants was about 15. The participants represented diverse backgrounds. At most sessions, a handful of attendees were present from out of town, mostly from academic institutions or natural resource management organizations. There were usually at least one or two local residents with extensive knowledge of sea level rise. The target group, those with limited or no knowledge of sea level rise, usually represented an additional few people (unfortunately this group was underrepresented; causes and possible remedies will be discussed later). Participants also represented a diversity of ages, genders and racial backgrounds. Most sessions had at least one senior citizen and one African-American representative, fairly equal gender balance, and a wide range of ages, with a predominance of White professionals.

While the following results depict an informed understanding among participants of the impacts and implications of sea level rise and coastal population growth, this does not mean that communities are widely informed. At each session, at least two participants were well-informed on sea level rise and able to educate their peers on subjects such as saltwater inundation and stormwater runoff. This phenomenon, of cross-pollinating among participants, was a successful means of educating people about the issues. Instead of hearing the facts from an "outsider," they heard them from a community member and the topic gained legitimacy. If their neighbors witnessed this happening, they seemed more likely to believe it.



A breakout group discusses implications of sea level rise and population growth at a session in Washington, North Carolina.

Another important point is that these results are meant to represent the diversity of opinions, rather than the prevalence of opinions. Participants were self-selecting and not a statistically significant population. Nevertheless, since outreach was done to diverse groups and attendance incorporated members of widely dispersed social groups, it can be concluded that their ideas represent the opinions of community members from a wide array of backgrounds, education, experience and knowledge.

Findings

Changes

- One of the primary environmental changes that people are seeing is increasing erosion rates. They also noted changes in salinity and vegetation, species presence, and saltwater inundation onto farmlands and into aquifers.
- Water quality concerns are high on the list for residents in the region, since water factors prominently in the culture and the local economy. Participants noted a change in the primary water pollution source – once due to farming – now seen to be a result of runoff from development.
- Cultural change was also a big topic of discussion. The influx of retirees and wealthier residents to estuarine coast communities has changed them – for both positive and negative. There was a predominant feeling of lost traditions and way of life.
- Development was seen as playing an

“Many of these developments would have been unthinkable 10 years ago.”

“We’re the last cheap land to develop. The world has discovered us.”

increasingly prominent role in landscape change, environmental degradation, and local government decision-making.

- The increase in retirees is not seen as an economic boon to the region; rather, residents perceive cultural changes and potential economic liability resulting from this influx.

Impacts

- Even though participants talked about erosion as a change they are currently seeing, they did not focus on erosion as an expected impact of rising seas. Instead, they saw impact in terms of water quality — such as increased salinity and runoff — and water quantity — in terms of more flooding and bigger storm surges.
- People are concerned with water-related impacts on tourism, fisheries and culture.
- Many saw the loss of traditional, natural-resource based jobs such as farming and fishing, as related to development and a changing environment and expected that the loss of these jobs would be exacerbated by the current sea level rise and population growth trends.
- Without government intervention, people don't expect that development will slow in conjunction with sea level rise. Instead, they see an increasing lack of understanding of risk inherent in coastal living in the attitudes of the people moving in.
- There is tremendous fear that the increasing divide between wealthy coastal residents and economically depressed inland residents will foster inequality in the response to sea level rise. Participants expected that poor coastal communities will bear the burden of protecting and relocating wealthy residents living on the shoreline.
- Many feared that short-term solutions would be the focus of adaptation, leading to public investment that would eventually be lost.

“The Albemarle-Pamlico is a nationally important resource and it could be lost.”

“I’m not optimistic that people will think twice about buying waterfront lots.”

“These discussions need to be happening in schools ”

hopelessness or fear, but instead helps people understand how it applies to them. This can be done by framing it in terms of local economy, community planning and new opportunity.

- Education was a dominant theme in the solutions discussion. People thought there was limited knowledge in the general public about the nature of sea level rise, so many of the suggestions for educating the general public focused on

providing basic information out there to them about the what/when/how/why of sea level rise. In contrast, the education that was recommended for government was more about mobilizing them to take action, plan for, and manage the process of community adaptation to sea level rise.

- People see more opportunity in nature-based solutions than in hardened shoreline solutions, which are perceived as a short-term fix.
- Since the loss of natural resource-based jobs was a large concern in the discussion of changes and impacts, it's worth noting how it factored in the solutions discussion. Solutions such as oyster beds, wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation were offered as a means of buffering shorelines, but their restoration would also bolster the fisheries industry. Participants also suggested working with coastal farmers to preserve large areas for transition to wetlands because it could have positive benefits for preserving farmland.

“Protect[ing] waterfronts for aesthetic purposes ... will increase the value of the waterfront as a public resource and keep people from living there.”

Recommendations

Despite a concerted effort to reach out to community members with little prior knowledge of sea level rise, attendance at the sessions was lower than the facilitation team desired. Some residents couldn't see why they should be concerned about the issue of sea level rise so they didn't feel compelled to attend. For that reason, training outreach volunteers how to communicate the issue's importance to coastal plain residents is necessary for future sessions. Furthermore, additional volunteers would have allowed for more direct access to communities and elected officials, who were missing from most sessions.

The facilitation team debated how much information we should include in the sessions about sea level rise. Since our target audience included people with limited or no knowledge of sea level rise, we felt that it was important to simply present the projected amount and location of sea level rise using maps, rather than spending significant time discussing the complexity of the issue. This would enable us to focus on issues and implications rather than details of sea level rise science.

Our audiences tended to be well-educated and informed, making the session more challenging in terms of balancing information needs of multiple groups. Many of the participants attended the session for more information. While we provided packets of information with in-depth information about projected sea level rise, climate change science, and resources for more information, we fell short in providing these individuals with the depth of information they desired. Nevertheless, those participants who came with no prior knowledge, benefited from the unexpected outcome of information sharing among participants. Those with substantial knowledge felt compelled, most likely from the deficit in information they perceived, to share what they understood about the issue. This proved extremely effective in some locations for providing just enough added information, articulated in a non-technical and non-lectured way. In fact, there were two locations where informed participants managed to convince “skeptics” who were attending with the purpose of refuting the information (only to find that they were not attending a lecture and the facilitators were there to listen), of the reality of sea level.

The facilitation team observed how this unexpected outcome was a very powerful learning moment.

Conclusion

These listening sessions were only the beginning of what should be a comprehensive outreach campaign to develop solutions to the challenges of sea level rise and population growth. The modest level of participation in the sessions, despite concerted outreach effort, is evidence that inland residents don't think this issue affects them. However, upon hearing about the projections and beginning to contemplate the implications these changes will have on their communities, participants were transformed. This suggests that residents are responsive to the information. After the sessions, several people said they thought this issue only impacted people with homes on the water, but in thinking about the broader social and economic issues they realized that it would affect them in a direct way. This indicates a need for education and outreach to communities that are not yet engaged.

About the Sponsors

The **Albemarle-Pamlico Conservation and Communities Collaborative**, or AP3C, was established by conservation and community groups to develop approaches that integrate economic and ecological resilience for the lands, waters and communities of the Albemarle-Pamlico region. The AP3C recognizes the challenges presented by economic and social distress, climate change, population change, and increasing risks to public health. They implement collaborative, sustainable solutions for regional well-being.

The **Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program**, or APNEP, is a cooperative effort sponsored by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The mission of APNEP is to identify, restore and protect the significant resources of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system.

Audubon North Carolina is the state office of the National Audubon Society representing 10,000 grassroots members and nine local chapters across the state. With a century of conservation history in North Carolina, Audubon strives to conserve and restore the habitats we share with all wildlife, focusing on the needs of birds. Audubon North Carolina achieves its mission through a blend of science-based research and conservation, education and outreach, and advocacy.

The **Conservation Fund's Resourceful Communities Program** was established in 1991, to help North Carolina's underserved communities create new economies that protect and restore, rather than extract, natural resources. **Resourceful Communities** provides a range of direct assistance to develop the leadership and organizational capacity necessary for sustainable community development. Because **Resourceful Communities** works closely with local partners, including nonprofit, private and public concerns, we help ensure local ownership of long-term economic, social and environmental change.

Environmental Defense Fund is a leading national nonprofit organization that represents more than 500,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems.

The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the

lands and waters they need to survive. The Nature Conservancy's office in North Carolina has protected almost 700,000 acres. Working with its partners, the Conservancy has helped to protect almost a half million acres of property in the Albemarle region - all of which is threatened by sea level rise.

The Natural Resources Leadership Institute is an instructional and community service program of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at NC State University. The goal of the Natural Resources Leadership Institute is to improve management and policy decisions affecting North Carolina's communities and natural resources. NRLI works toward this goal by convening forums of stakeholders and decision makers, providing collaborative leadership training, and conducting research.

About the Planning & Facilitation Team

Cynthia Brown, MPA – has 26 years of experience in non-profit management and social justice activism. She is a part-time employee of The Conservation Fund and the founder and lead consultant of The Sojourner Group, whose mission is to increase peoples' ability to build their own organizations, establish effective alliances, and advocate for public policies that address their needs.

Sharon Campbell – is the president of SYNERGY Development and Training Group, an organization that believes holistic knowledge and resources build strong communities through collaborations that result in positive change and sustainable growth. She believes the most effective solutions for communities are within the people who have the greatest stake in the outcome.

Lucy Roberts Henry, MEM – is a watershed management coordinator with the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program in the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. She helps coordinate the implementation of APNEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan by working with APNEP's partners to advance natural resource protection through community-based initiatives in the Albemarle-Pamlico sounds watershed. Henry has more than five years of experience in international, non-profit program management and training in facilitation and environmental leadership.

Marilynn Marsh Robinson – is a program associate with Environmental Defense Fund in Raleigh and works with the Southeast Oceans team on fishery management and the Land, Water, Wildlife team on animal operations, clean water and community engagement. She is interested in seeing the conventional environmental movement engage and build relationships with affected communities in hopes of achieving environmental conservation and economic equity for everyone.

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