Coastal Hazards Risk Communication: A Technical Assistance Transfer Project within the National Estuarine Research Reserve System

Project Location

Chesapeake Bay-Maryland NERR
Delaware NERR
Jacques Cousteau NERR
Narragansett Bay NERR
Weeks Bay NERR

Project Duration

June 2017 to May 2019

Project Lead

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Project Type

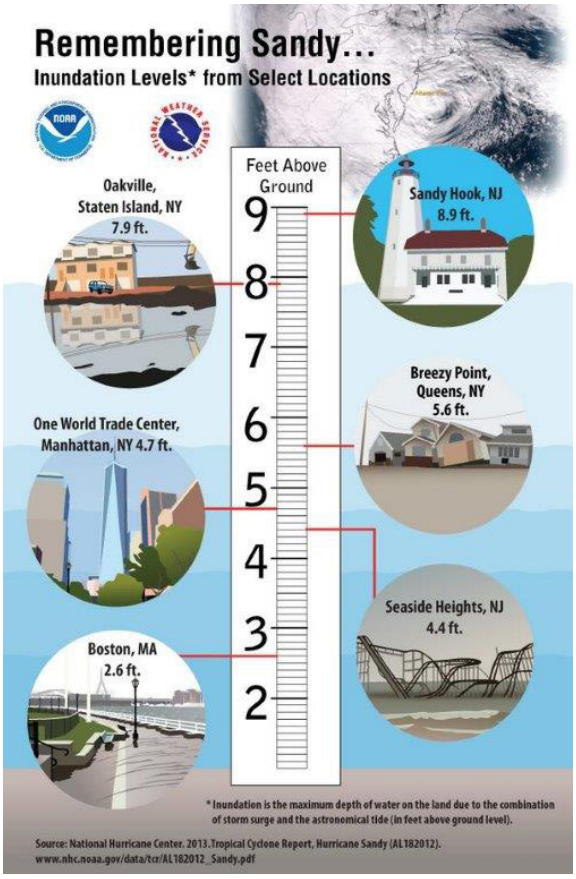
Science Transfer – promoting the use of science

Project Partners

- Chesapeake Bay-Maryland NERR
- Delaware NERR
- Jacques Cousteau NERR
- Narragansett Bay NERR
- National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
- NOAA Office for Coastal Management
- Weeks Bay NERR

Overview

This project transfers risk communication materials and trainings developed through a collaboration between the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve and NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, with the help of a risk communication expert. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the Jacques Cousteau reserve and the Office for Coastal Management recognized that coastal decision-makers needed effective risk communication skills to help community decision-makers and residents understand and implement resiliency planning and risk hazard management. Their collaboration resulted in the development of a new Office for Coastal Management risk communication training for coastal decision-makers.



These risk communication skills have broad value for National Estuarine Research Reserve System staff and their coastal partners around the country. This project aims to apply the trainings and materials developed by the Jacques Cousteau reserve and the Office for Coastal Management to build risk communication capacity in four coastal communities. The project combines a general risk communication training with a technical assistance workshop designed to meet the needs of the local decision-making community. The two-day event will allow coastal outreach personnel to be equipped with general skills, as well as with expert insights for specific projects involving risk communication.

Anticipated Benefits

- Reserves, coastal decision-makers, and educators will gain skills in risk communication for their coastal communities.
- Researchers, coastal decision-makers, and educators will gain site- and project-specific technical assistance to improve their risk communication practices.
- Coastal decision-makers will be better prepared to communicate risk in order to improve resiliency planning and coastal hazard management.

Project Approach

This project pairs a one-day training on risk communication with a one-day technical assistance workshop to build capacity for the National Estuarine Research Reserves and their area partners to communicate risk effectively. The training and workshop will take place at four National Estuarine Research Reserves. On the first day, Office for Coastal Management staff will deliver their training on risk communication for reserve staff, area coastal decision-making partners, educators, and other extension personnel. On the second day, each of the participating reserves will host a hands-on, technical assistance training for reserve staff and area partners. The technical assistance training will address site- and project-specific challenges they face in communicating risk and will help them identify and strategize ways of creating desired behavioral changes for their target audiences. The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) will work with each of the reserves following their technical assistance workshop to share information about the topics covered, audiences, and participants at the training through social media, newsletter articles, or press releases.

Targeted End Users and Anticipated Products

- Reserves, coastal decision-makers, outreach professionals, and educators will gain skills in risk communication that they can immediately put into practice.
- NERRA will help all training participants share their risk communication skills and efforts with relevant audiences.

About the Science Collaborative

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System's Science Collaborative supports collaborative research that addresses coastal management problems important to the reserves. The Science Collaborative is managed by the University of Michigan's Water Center through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Funding for the research reserves and this program comes from NOAA. Learn more at coast.noaa.gov/nerrs or graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.