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March 13, 2013: Regional Sea Level Rise  
Assessment, Adaptation and Flood Mitigation  
Projects

Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise/Flooding  
Adaptation Forum


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3-13-2013

# Forum Notes

HR Adaptation Forum

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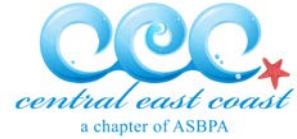
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A joint meeting of the  
**Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise/Flooding Adaptation Forum**  
and the  
**Central East Coast Chapter of the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2013**

Virginia Modeling, Simulation and Analysis Center of Old Dominion University

**NOTES:**

*Brian Joyner, Norfolk Coastal Flood Mitigation Program*

Q: How many people were not familiar with the Norfolk Study before this presentation?

A: Maybe 5-7 hands went up. Most of audience was familiar already.

Q: How useful is it to hear about the experiences and efforts of a particular locality

A: Hampton official values it—helps make them aware of tide data that might be available as they think about pumping stations.

*Mike Forte, USACE*

Q from forum member: How do you explain 100 year floodplain and risks to the general public? How do you communicate about modeling to the public? Challenges of getting people to understand risk.

*Molly Mitchell, VIMS*

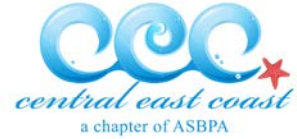
Questions/feedback:

Need to involve emergency mgrs and disaster recovery to prevent what has happened post Katrina and Sandy where people rebuild exactly where things have been flooded and destroyed.

Communities are dealing with TMDL planning and lots of other things on top of adaptation planning (missed next point!).

Sherrene Moore: people often skip the stakeholder engagement stage of adaptation planning—need to get everyone engaged in advance.

*Discussion*



Liz: Ideas about future topics for next forum meetings? Ideas for public meeting?

Next year's national ASBPA conference is in VA Beach and one of themes is SLR, so we'd like to keep this group in tune with that.

Topics for future forums—show of hands

Outreach and communications—maybe 15 or so hands?

This is challenging (communications) Multiple competing forces—events on different time horizons (SLR vs individual storm events). Very hard to communicate.

Larry: how about having people speak from different perspectives on how they communicate? Got positive response.

Need a science-based social media strategy informed by academic communications.

Strike balance of how severe to make the threat seem

Wrapping land use into discussion.

Increased flooding risk due to SLR

Need to address young people who are going to live in post 2050 world.

Get message out that SL has been rising—it has happened in the past and its happening now.

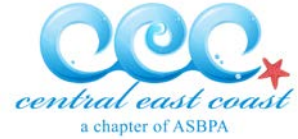
In the last 10 years people are getting better at the messaging. As a group I think we're getting better at the messaging, but as scientists we have to be careful about overstepping our bounds. Climate change has given a bad name to science and people don't believe scientists anymore.

NPS rep: We have a certain group of people that we automatically think about communicating with but there are other groups we don't think of as much. Who are the people who don't think they are an audience for the message.

Sherrene Moore: Business is operating on short planning timeframe so they are not thinking about SLR. Another difficult audience to reach is elected official.

Ben McFarlane: This forum was intentionally designed to include staff but not elected officials because the staff inform the officials.

Maybe need to talk about communication strategies with decision makers and elected officials.



Looking at lobbying groups that are putting up messages to the contrary (special interest groups).

Get people to share from outreach work in MD or DE because they are ahead of us.

Transatlantic conference—people advising on communication from there.

A lot of cities work with their public information officers to get messages out. These folks should be invited to this forum.

City of Norfolk has been conducting regular public meetings w/presentations followed by discussion. Started with civic leaders. Allowed them to clear up some misinformation and inaccuracies about flood risks. Particularly effective for that—misinformation was leading to public works wasting resources addressing politicians concerns about things that were not really important.