**Sea Level Rise Conference**

**Panel 1: Physical Threat**

**Short Summary of main points:**

* Improve HOW scientists communicate with public, planners, policy makers, etc.
* Scientists give SLR projection ranges, planners need a number to plan for
* Special interest groups used scientific uncertainty to discredit information
* Better visual, easy to understand information; use social media.
* Awareness from trusted sources (e.g., Navy officer, rather than interest groups)
* Improve WHAT information scientists provide to public
* Avoid political jargon
* Focus not on whether or not climate change exists or what causes it but what should be done
* Combine SLR and storm effect
* Public awareness efforts need to be linked to economic benefits
* Research on the economic and social impacts of past weather events
* The implication of sea level acceleration vs. just SLR
* Collaboration
* Collaboration across regions and States
* Local governments of coastal cities should collaborate
* Studies funded by Navy should include the impact on the local community

***Consensus Points:***

* Need consistent guidance on a sea level rise number that can be used for planning.
* Politicians and special interests exploit uncertainty to justify minimalist measures, deny funding. They take advantage of scientists’ inclination to give RANGES and talk about uncertainty rather than solid predictions to discredit the information.
* Scientists need to make studies more accessible to policy makers and to the public.
* Research must be communicated in visual/easy to understand way.
* Shift discussion from whether or not climate change exists to what should be done now. This is difficult because of the political nature of the debate.
* Message about local awareness needs to be consistent and come from a trusted source for people to believe it.
* Combination of sea-level rise **and** storm effects is vital.
* Wider community participation at the local level to identify stressors.
* Can improve communication with public using social media, nonprofit groups.
* Avoid politicization of the terms and issues.
* Localities need nationwide leadership.
* Need clear strategies for how to talk to the public about preparedness. Public doesn’t see sea level as being a component of flooding historically.
* New research shows SLR is accelerating and this message will have to be carefully communicated.
* Using the term ‘recurrent flooding’ as opposed to ‘sea level rise’ makes it more relevant to residents. Laws in the state are written around ‘flooding’ … or other terms….. so to allow municipalities to take action.

***Takeaways/Action Items:***

* Often, interdisciplinary projects are not fruitful or productive because the science may contradict the qualitative findings of a study. There needs to be more collaboration, of course, but more specifically, there needs to be more cooperative collaboration.
* Public awareness efforts need to be linked to economic benefits both for individuals and for the private sector.
* Express the risk of sea-level rise in the Hampton Roads area in economic terms to raise public awareness.
* Collaborate across the region.
* Need number to use for planning. Need scientific community to communicate with risk assessors; for example to inform the public when they’re in a flood zone when they’re purchasing a home.
* Timeline – short term impacts versus long term impacts; addressing the next generation. Address values for each generation.

***General Question: Given what you've learned during this panel, what types of collaborative research and action might be most useful in affecting adaptive policy?***

* Scientists should focus on understanding the system to take away uncertainties.
* Even though studies are funded by the Navy, studies should not just be limited to bases, it should also include the surrounding city.
* Using GIS to collaborate across disciplines. Often GIS is not used well collaboratively, but it can be.
* Protect the most vulnerable populations, especially for evacuation; trying to meet the needs of all of the population without going so far as telling them not to live there.
* Communication is most important. People will believe when their flood insurance policies triple. Local governments could partner with each other across the US coast lines to share information and strategies to create a communication plan.
* Research on the economic impact of past weather events, and the social impacts.
* Social learning that addresses time, space and differing socio-economic differentials is key. Ethics experts should be brought into the mix. Shifting human nature to “survival of the species”.

***Miscellaneous/Interesting:***

* How do we raise awareness so the public has faith in our predictions, listen to us when we tell them they have to evacuate?
* We have to make it as safe as possible while still recognizing property rights.
* Need guidance from the state so we have the authority to develop adaptive policy. Very difficult to do everything we need to do, and to plan, without guidance and political support from the state. This would be easier to do if there was some consensus on a number, a predicted sea level rise to be used for planning purposes.