

2017 Beaches Conference

PM Plenary Notes

Listening for a change: stories of our responses to SLR

Notes: Beth Bisson

Guidelines

- Listen to understand
- Participate respectfully
- Avoid technology distractions

Robert Almeder

- Lives in Kennebunkport
- Grew up in Boston, and south of Boston
- Taught Philosophy/Epistemology, Philosophy of Science (NY, GA)
- Calls himself a climate skeptic; aware that his views are deeply unpopular with some
- Three Questions
 - What is the proof for the evidence of the belief that CO2 emissions are a relevant cause of global warming?
 - How do you distinguish CO2 molecules produced by humans, and those produced by nature?
 - If you can't distinguish, then how can you justify the claim that most is released by human activities
 - How reliable are the latest projections that SLR will pose a serious threat to low-lying countries by 2100?
 - Discussed uncertainty around the timing of Arctic and Antarctic ice melt

Julie Clark Boak

- Read excerpts from her writing about growing up on the coast of MA, north of Boston
- Read from *One Woman in One House in One Bay*
- "If you ask the wrong questions, you're going to get the wrong answers"
- Deeply affected by "An Inconvenient Truth," but frustrated by not finding data to back up the assertions about SLR
- Started doing her own review of the research to understand
- Bought the house on Long Island, bought a boat, a desk, and a bed
- Didn't buy flood insurance until she renovated the house in 2006 (rain policy) – started looking at FEMA maps, trying to understand the risk/vulnerability/odds – this was post-Katrina
- "I found there is a world out there. It's called Science, and I am not a native."
- Has been engaging people in theatre about SLR and climate change – session this afternoon

Cameron Wake

- "Butting heads are better than one."

- Shared story about butting heads with NH state legislators about legislation re: preparing for SLR and storm surge
- Commission needed guidance on which SLR projections to use, 2014
- His presentation focused on three main points
 - SLR is driven by a variety of factors
 - Rate of SLR has doubled over the past 3 decades
 - SLR is going to continue for many centuries to come – only real question is how much, by when (b/c of all the uncertainty around melting ice sheets)
- State Legislator spoke against the validity of his data/presentation; he got angry and responded with a tirade about his data sources, and offered to review any conflicting data sources
 - Legislator did send him a number of articles – opinion pieces by well-known climate deniers, and implored him “let’s not get into a battle over peer review.”
 - His response – “everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts,” and vigorously defended the value of peer reviewed science
 - Agreed to disagree on the climate science, but did agree about the value of having “no regrets actions,” and about having a contingency plan.
- His take-aways
 - It’s important for scientists to show up as communities are grappling with the contingencies of preparing for climate change
 - Not essential for everyone to read peer-reviewed articles, but essential for everyone to recognize the value of peer review
 - Essential to be in the same space and speak with one another in order to understand – make the time to show up, be active listeners, and develop a shared understanding of the facts, and a shared vision for solving common problems

Q&A

- One comment to refute points made by Almeder
- Book suggestions from Chris Feurt
 - Strangers in Their Own Land
 - The Invention of Nature