

Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience

Moderator: Cameron Wake PhD- Climate Scientist UNH

Christa Daniels PhD Candidate Antioch University New England:

The engagement Gap Brining “knowing to action” in three steps:

- Knowledge/Cognition
- Concern/Affect
- Action/Behavior

Christa outlined the important of engaging Americans on the issues of climate change and the importance of “knowing thy audience”, awareness is on the rise up to 70% of Americans being aware, with only 50% believing that it is human caused concurrently, 97% of scientists believe that it is Human caused. The concern is much lower among the American people, only 7% believe that the US can counter these issues, arguing that people disengage when they don't feel that there actions will help. Christa also outlined the importance of framing the message, especially when you are distinguishing the difference between, “climate change” and “global warming”. She also showed examples of cooperate marketing vs. the inundation of numbers with marketing surrounding climate change awareness. She then moved on to certain barriers for comprehension of climate change awareness, focusing on heuristics and psychological distancing using visuals and storytelling using non partisan ideas and providing solutions. The framing for engagement that she outlines is challenge, choice and opportunity.

Steve Miller NHCAW Costal Adaptation Workgroup

Steve started off by talking about he New Hampshire advantage of having small coastline with many resourced focused into a small area. His organization CAW helps fill the gap that some smaller communities are left with that do not have the proper infrastructure for costal planning and dealing with climate change. CAW has many partners with core organizational strengths and is a rich resource for all municipalities. They assist the communities in outreach and education, coordinating partners/effort, securing funding and support efforts on a state and federal level. They fund and create regional climate assessments to help educate the public. In addition to that they provide customized workshop, forums and community conversations based on a given communities needs with the goal of engaging the audience and building trust with community members. He emphasized the importance of listening closely to what a given community needs, and stressed how climate does not need to be an added department, but rather incorporated as a filter into everything that a community does.

Ally Philip Program Manager NE Grassroots Environmental Fund:

Ally has worked on research to identify people who are Climate Adaptation Champions and how assist technical assistance providers can help them emerge to help more people better understand climate change and adapt policy to represent correcting these issues. The objective of her research was to understand how CAC's affect issues such as sea-level rise, flooding and increased frequency of severe storms. Her research also included how to create new CAC's. She found that public awareness was well received regarding adaptation projects, town involvement and media. Despite the wide array of support, lack of funding and Technical resources (ARC and GIS mapping) has proved to be a major barrier. To counter this, CAC's need the public backing as well as local grassroots efforts and a committed town planner.

Julia Peterson: New Hampshire Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension

Julia's spoke to how CAW has responded to the study that Ali completed. They have built a new structure for recognizing Climate Adaptation Champions and building up their online resources. They have tripled the amount of money they have brought into local communities. She said that recently the local leaders have been at the forefront of mitigating the effects of climate change. CAW's goal it to act as a technical assistance provider to these community leaders.

Discussion

We have come a long way as far as climate adaptation, however, where do we need to be in the next 5-7 years?

- Continue with communication and optimism of change.
- Support our community leaders and stakeholders.
- Move away from pushing values onto people, and help make communities climate resilience while enhancing their values.
- Promote our champions
- Normalizing practical changes within the communities
- Moving away from a top down approach to climate resilience
- Stormwater grants that protect the wastewater infrastructure and climate resistant planning.
- Risk management of climate change science
- Updating the scientific findings and projections
- Addressing the uncertainty of climate change and the policy surrounding it
- Making the big issues surrounding climate change out of the realm of taboo
- Better support for our underserved communities to adapt and become resilient to climate change