

**11:00 - 12:30 Concurrent Sessions I**

Howe Hall 205: ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN CONVERSATION ABOUT CLIMATE IMPACT

**1.) Presenter: Anne Cox - "Trading Places; Using role-play to understand how a community plans for climate impacts"**

**Talk-** New England Climate adaptation program, links to vulnerability. Funded by the National estuarine research reserve system. 3 goals of project, 1) assess local climate change risks, 2) identify key local barriers and perspectives 3) test the use of role play on perspectives of local climate change.

1. **Assess local climate change:** local climate projections for i.e. precipitation, temperature, sea level rise, extreme weather events
  1. trends were all similar, focused in the winter
  2. sea level rise = 5-6 ft. y end of century for example
2. **Identify key barriers and Perspectives:** local projections provided local concern in stakeholders
  1. Number one barrier = most people were very concerned about local changes due to climate change but believed their town isn't very competent in doing anything
3. **Test the use of role play...** : Role play personalized for each town based on risk and stakeholder assessment
  1. 115 people included, including roles such as town planners/ managers etc
  2. had a few hours to come to a negotiated agreement, based on
  3. increased concern after the game, along with increased sense of local collective responsibility, confidence in local adaptation, and enhanced perspectives of climate change impacts on the local level and how to go about managing for that
  4. ex of actions being taken
    1. land-use planning, infrastructure planning, long term planning, env regulations, adaption plans, partnerships, public education, collective action and awareness
  5. preparing for climate change risks is a community challenge, not just about generating more awareness. role play game allowed for community preparedness
  6. [necap.mit.edu](http://necap.mit.edu) for more information

## Q&A-

“roles that were played”?

Roles consisted of normal town representatives and planners

“has this been applied to an institution of higher education?”

some classrooms in York County Community College and UNE, but it is encouraged for anyone who is willing to apply it in their classroom. The curriculum is online

## **2.) Presenter: Laura Sewall & Valerie Pendleton - “Exploring attitudes about sea level rise”**

**Talk-** What is behind the attitudes surrounding climate change? Survey was done to understand the psychological aspects of sea level rise

Yale Project on communication of climate change

1.) attitudes have objects; beliefs with both a cognitive component and an emotional component, and either a positive or negative direction

-Identity and direct experiences are important to building a strong attitude

-can these attitudes change with new experiences

Pilot Study, Survey

- 2 page survey asking about the rate of change they witnessed
- 26 local home owners and business owners
- 92% people lived on coast and all saw a change, with an average score of observable change
- 77% thought climate change impact local fisheries
- only 54% said they felt impacted (contrasts with 92% who saw change)
  - due to people thinking in a short term
- 84% said sea level rise was due to climate change
- confusion about what is to blame, but regardless would like immediate change to be done
- how do these perspectives influence adaptation to climate change
  - resilience factors
    - diversity, connectivity, realistic optimism, facing fear, cognitive and emotional flexibility, doing what is right

## Q&A-

"getting people to be more flexible?"

Adding direct experience, social affinity groups, including own experience and reflection

"how consistent was your survey with the Yale project?"

somewhat close but the survey was preliminary

### **3.) Presenter: Ruth Indrick & Becky Kolak - "Through children's eyes: Measuring local climate impacts with kids"**

**Talk-** Kennebec Land Trust

Georgetown and Bath, ME Communities focus on climate change and sea level rise

WANTED: forward thinking communities ready to take action to protect salt marshes from rising seas

1. vulnerability assessment
2. Presentations around the town
3. working with students in the local school
  1. build educated population
  2. engage members of the community who might otherwise not be interested
  3. youth are great ambassadors

1. focusing local = direct connection and experience that builds attitudes
2. included climate weather and maine history

Greenhouse gas tag

-connects the way GCG work to a game that they can comprehend visually and through an experience

Sea level rise field project

-looked at maps and historical sea level rise data and put those into perspective into how this might impact their local community. The children would be taken outside to these locations and with simple classroom-made tools they can calculate where sea level rise will impact their community. Small notifications are then attached to local landmarks to show where the water levels will be in so many years.

### Adaptation

- infrastructure and wildlife
- adapt or move during sea level rise and temperature increases
  - used a town meeting as a setting for including all the representatives (both humans and animal species) that would need to either move or adapt to local changes due to climate change

### Q&A-

“ how does this work with typical curriculum standards “

Worked well with expeditionary schools that allow time for these kinds of activities.

### SUMMARY:

**This session really focused on the perspective of climate change and the impacts they will have on our local community. Each of the presentations presented a unique way of understanding who knows what, who is concerned, and who is proactive with regards to the impacts of climate change. The conversations certainly revealed how perspective drives our behavior as citizens and city planners. The activities and study data that was shared also reenforced the fact that when people are placed into a scenario, such as a situation of natural disaster, they are inclined to change their perspective. When 115 members of a community were asked to get together and role play these new perspectives drove new awareness and preparedness for the future. After listening to the stories**

brought back by those who traveled to New Jersey, the ideas discussed in this session were driven home. Seeing and feeling how something like a hurricane Sandy can effect your community is extremely powerful. This directly ties in with the three presentations included in this session. When students were brought out to study how sea level rise might effect their home town, it now only impacted those students for life, but engaged the community with a visual representation of how sea level rise threatens their favorite places. It is clear that these new ideas of engaging our youth, citizens, and town managers are important for our resistance to the impacts of climate change.

Many of the questions during this session were with regards to how these types of projects could be applied in their own towns or class rooms. There certainly were many interested and like minded individuals in the room. Other questions dove deeper into the different project ideas and how they worked. The projects were well received and many were eager to test them out in their fields. Many of the presenters brought copies of their curriculum or handed out online resources that allows others to recreated their activities.