

**Undercurrents: Navigating the Human Dynamics of Coastal Adaptation**  
**The Beaches Conference**  
**June 14, 2019**

Note Taker: Nik Charov, Laudholm Trust

Undercurrents: Managing the Human Dynamics of Managed Retreat

- An effort to start the tough discussion
- UNH PowerPlay interactive development
- “Interactive training laboratories”
- UNH’s David Kay “a forum in which we can delve into the human element of various difficult issues” “Conversations people don’t want to have”
- Developed with support from Consensus Building Institute
- Allows participants to experiment with difficult topics

Why is **managed retreat** a difficult topic? MANY reasons.

PowerPlay team interviewed different stakeholders working on managed retreat over a few months

- Scientists, residents, muni leaders, technical advisors
- Wanted to understand points of view, fears, frustrations
- “What are the obstacles in the way of discussing managed retreat?”
- Straightforward, truthful, authentic

Three actors took the stage: imagine you’re listening as a confidante to these three, who cannot hear each other, as they reveal their inner thoughts

- \* Jimmy, resident, 35 year coastal homeowner, noticing change, puzzled
- \* Catherine, alarmed scientist, frustrated
- \* Susan, civic leader, 30 year career, frustrated

RESULTS

- Audience buys into the characters, asks them questions directly or talks about them as real people
- A session to hear some thoughts, try some strategies, a laboratory
- “If you hear a line or a question that you would want to address, or that you have no idea how to address, save those questions for the characters our actors are playing.”

- “A powerful way to model and get a dialogue going” Chris Feurt
- Additional write-up:

<https://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20190618/sea-level-rise-creates-a-parallel-universe/1>