

## **21st International Conference of The Coastal Society**

### **Meeting the Needs of Coastal Communities in the Face of Climate Change: Creating a National Model of State-based Outreach**

Jenna Borberg\*, Joseph Cone, and Michael Harte  
College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University

The impacts of climate change on coastal communities are amplified as coastal populations increase and coastal use and development expand. For communities to increase resilience to climate change and its impacts, coastal stakeholders need to understand likely impacts and where appropriate take adaptive action. Oregon Sea Grant addresses this imperative by developing and testing a national model of state-based outreach involving public and private decision makers in specific at-risk coastal communities of Oregon and Maine. The project is funded by NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program. Climate change outreach material is riddled with misinformation and disinformation. Media hype often exacerbates this situation. Outreach practitioners often have preconceived notions of what coastal communities need to know. Even when outreach effectively disseminates climate change information and tools, this does not always eventuate in a conscious choice to take action or not. We call for climate change outreach efforts to be better grounded in the psychological sciences. Two psychological frameworks are being examined for their usefulness: an integrative model of behavior prediction, and risk perception and communication. We will undertake qualitative studies of Oregon and Maine coastal communities (i.e., focus groups, interviews) in an effort to better understand individual and group attitudes, beliefs, and peer-group norms about climate change vulnerabilities and adaptive actions. From this understanding, we are designing outreach materials on climate change which address the psychological “background” factors and social “foreground” decisions of our target audiences, thus providing relevant and enabling information as communities plan to adapt.

Jenna Borberg  
College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences  
Oregon State University  
104 COAS Administration Building  
Corvallis, OR 97331-5503  
jborberg@coas.oregonstate.edu