

8th Annual Southern and Caribbean Regional Meeting

With the ongoing recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as a backdrop, the theme of the 8th Annual Southern and Caribbean Regional Meeting was:

“Preparing for, weathering, and recovering from hurricanes and other coastal hazards: what is the role of the federal and state coastal management programs?”

As several state and NOAA officials and outside experts gave presentations, answered questions, and led discussions, the meeting began to focus on the concept of “hazard resilient communities.”

Some of the key components of hazard resilience that were identified are:

- **Planning** is essential, especially **pre-disaster planning**; very important to have post-disaster recovery groundwork already laid out before a storm hits
- **Local involvement** is critical
- Need to discuss the interaction of coastal management and emergency management
- Need to **understand the limitations** of existing tools and planning approaches, and what may make them more effective
- Tremendous need to **leadership** before, during and following a disaster
- Need to understand CZM role in providing, improving, and facilitating leadership
- Need to articulate **trade-offs** for rebuilding after storms (traditional uses, businesses, public/resident safety, navigation)
- Need to identify and articulate **risks and vulnerability**
- Important to have inventory of resources, programs and agencies who can help
- Difficulties and conflicts exist with **jurisdictional issues** between state and local levels - need to **build partnerships and local capacity**
- **Natural features** often provide the first line of defense and need protection
- Protecting **local economic engines** and infrastructure will help communities rebound
- Need to better **communicate** potential effects of storms and influence public behavior - make safety a priority and expect unanticipated effects (e.g. secondary flooding)
- Media is incredibly influential - how can it be used to our advantage?