

Session: Policy Responses to Coastal Storms and Hazards

Tina Shumate, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources The Mississippi Comprehensive Resource Management Plan Policy Responses

Katrina Impacts:

- 230 deaths in addition to 45 not yet identified (and therefore not yet included in official casualty count)
- 65,000 homes destroyed, including many historic landmarks.

Outreach:

- Tina started outreach the Saturday after the hurricane. The Smart growth program works with 11 cities and 6 coastal counties.
- Also working on government forum for environment as well as GIS and stormwater groups.
- worked with the Sun Herald to put together a book on Katrina.

What is needed:

- Outstanding local leadership. Big problem is that a lot of mayors just got elected right before the storm hit.

Town meetings – sometimes successful, sometimes not.

Sam Webb, Texas General Land Office Learning from the Past to Prepare for the Future

TX coastal background info:

- TX coastal populations predicted to grow by 1/3 over the next 25 years. (developers are buying up land now)
- TX has 3 of the top 10 ports in the nation.
- Galveston has the largest concentration

Hazard Mitigation Needs:

- Emergency education and outreach
- CZMA funding for hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness.
- Limit NFIP in high risk areas.
- Protect/enhance natural systems (beaches, dunes, wetlands, etc)
- Additional data for hazard mitigation - need to know what storms are capable of doing.

FEMA's Role:

- FEMA not a first responder. Locals have first responsibility; then state gov. FEMA comes in after 72 hours.
- Must have insurable project before you can get FEMA \$.

Rita Evacuation:

- TX didn't do very well with highway reversals (the contra flow lanes were opened too late).
- Need to plan for fuel shortages.
- Governor has since established an evacuation Task Force to make recommendations to improve process.
- Tried to organize post-storm return by zip codes, which didn't really work.

NFIP:

- Existing framework puts a large burden on the taxpayers.
- Questions to look at – will we have enough \$ to cover future years with big disasters.
- Why do premiums go up every year?

TX issues:

- Texas has open beaches act mandating that private structures can't be in front of control line (need to check on this – my notes aren't clear), and you can't establish protection in front of control line.
- West Galveston Island – Private development building very low (would likely be flooded in category 1 storm). Should the state block this?
- Surfside area – people have illegally put rubble in front of their houses – it's hard to make people remove this, since they're very likely to lose their houses in the next storm.

Natural System Needs

- Need to pay attention to ebb and receding channels as well as the initial storm surge.
- Need to strengthen protection of dune systems. Right now they have a 1:1 dune mitigation ration – maybe should be increased to 2:1.
- Possibly could require construction bonds for construction near dune systems.
- Look at subsidence and erosion issues...also need to look at subsidence causes (natural processes or anthropogenic?).

James Hackett, South Carolina Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management How to reach decision makers

Who are decision makers?: city council, realtors, planning commission, developers, engineers, planning staff

1st step – identify what issues are important to you and find common concern w/ audience.

Types of outreach:

- speakers bureau. each section should have a speaker for their issues. Dept. should develop a collection of presentation, maintaining the same format for all presentations (branding)
- council meetings – don't wait until the official meeting to start outreach. Better to get on agenda item rather than just in the public comment period. Bring hard copies for council members to take home. Include follow-up opportunity.
- Fact sheets – be objective! Don't put opinion in these. 1 page and to the point. Bullet take home points.
- Small group meetings. Keep it to 2 hours or less. 8 people groups. Distribute agenda beforehand.
- Workshops

Continuing Education:

- Very good for realtors, lawyers, etc.
- Try to attach ½ workshops to other organizational meetings.
- Use local experts and local success stories when you can.
- When using picture slides, use arrows to point to what you're highlighting.