

# Improving Risk Communication

Planning Associates Program

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# Today we will present...

- Definition of Risk
- Communication Challenges
- Risks across Business Lines
- Need for Improving Communication
- Ideas to Improve Risk Communication



# What is Risk?

- Risk is the probability of suffering harm or loss.
- Water resources related risks are from flooding, hurricanes, recreational hazards and aging infrastructure.
- When there is not enough data to assign probability, there is uncertainty of attaining outputs.



# The Communication Challenge

- Wide variation of public views of risk
  - Lack of Interest
  - Preconceived Ideas
  - Misunderstanding of Probability
  - Lack Frame of Reference
  - Crave Certainty

# The Communication Challenge

- Balance critical message with layperson's terminology
  - Misunderstanding of Audience's Knowledge
  - Complex Terminology





# The Communication Challenge

- Projects reduce but never eliminate risk.
- Risk analysis is performed, but risk is not always communicated.
- Characterizations are entrenched, outdated and misleading.
- There are conflicting messages at the local level.
- The public is unaware of some types of risk to the economy.

# Risk Across Business Lines

- Risk to Life and Property
- Risk to the Economy
- Risk Associated with Quality of Life





# Risk to Life & Property

- Flood and Storm Protection
  - Residual Risk
  - Risk of Project Failure
  - Aging Infrastructure
- Recreation
  - Safety Programs





# Risk to the Economy

- Aging Navigation Projects
- Aging Hydropower Plants
- Water Supply Storage
- Flood Damage Reduction



# Risk Associated with Quality of Life

- Ecosystem Restoration
- Recreation
- Flood Damage Reduction
- Hydropower
- Water Supply



# Risk Across Business Lines

Business Line	Life	Property	Economy	Quality Life
Flood Damage Reduction	X	X	X	X
Navigation			X	X
Hydropower			X	X
Ecosystem Restoration				X
Water Supply			X	X
Recreation	X			X



# Why Improve Risk Communication?

- The public and local decision-makers continue to make uninformed decisions.
- In an era of competition for resources, public opinion can assist in obtaining funds to address aging infrastructure.
- There is a need for an internal standardization of terminology.



# Ideas to Improve Risk Communication

- Develop Corps Risk Communication Plan
- Develop New Ways to Characterize Risk
- Strengthen National Partnerships



# Ideas to Improve Risk Communication

- Develop Corps Risk Communication Plan
  - Task Force
  - Education Strategies
  - Focus Groups
  - Emulate Success
  - Budget Guidance
  - Applied Learning
  - Improved Planning



# Ideas to Improve Risk Communication

- Develop New Ways to Characterize Risk
  - Partner with Media
  - Focus Groups
  - Partner with Project Proponents
  - Visual Aides
  - Interactive Website



# Ideas to Improve Risk Communication

- Strengthen National Partnerships
  - National Risk Communication Policy
    - National Flood Risk Management Initiative Focus Groups
  - Silver Jackets
  - Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding
  - Building Codes



# Summary

- Definition of Risk
- Communication Challenges
- Risks across Business Lines
- Need for Improving Communication
- Ideas to Improve Risk Communication



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