

MEETING THE NEEDS OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: CREATING TARGETED OUTREACH MATERIALS

*Jenna Borberg, Oregon State University
Joseph Cone, Oregon Sea Grant
Michael Harte, Oregon State University
Laurie Jodice, Clemson University*

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The global climate is changing, and these changes will have ecological, social, and economic implications. Impacts are expected to vary regionally, with coastal regions being particularly vulnerable due to increases in sea level, precipitation, storm surges and inundation. These effects will be amplified as coastal populations and development continue to rapidly increase. To date, little has been done to direct climate change research and outreach material towards the needs of Oregon's coastal communities and coastal planners. Oregon Sea Grant conducted a web-based survey to evaluate the current level of knowledge and information needs amongst Oregon coastal professionals. To understand attitudes, beliefs, and peer-group norms about climate change vulnerabilities and adaptive actions, the research draws on two psychological frameworks: (1) an integrative model of behavioral prediction, and (2) risk perception and communication.

Our survey analyses (n=300) indicate that Oregon coastal professionals are concerned about climate change and how it may affect the Oregon coast, and they believe that governments and individuals should take action. However, both their information needs and behavioral barriers should be addressed to assist these professionals in taking constructive action. Coastal professionals need credible, relevant information on expected climate impacts specific to Oregon. Regarding barriers, respondents would be willing to take action in work if there were compelling information, new funding, and a sense of local urgency. These results show both similarities and differences to recent surveys carried out in California and Maine. From this understanding, we are creating targeted outreach materials on climate change which consider the psychological "background" factors and social "foreground" decisions of our audience, 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
jbtorberg@coas.oregonstate.edu
541-335-9877