

Mobilizing the Charleston Resilience Network

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The Charleston Resilience Network (CRN) is a volunteer– based coalition of public and private sector organizations in the Charleston, SC metro region that have a collective interest in the resilience of communities, critical infrastructure and socio–economic continuity to episodic natural disasters and chronic coastal hazards. A panel of CRN partner organization representatives will discuss the formation, accomplishments and strategic orientation of CRN’s first year as a coalition.

- Dan Burger, Director of Coastal Services for S.C. DHEC Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, will explain the catalyzing events that have led to the formation of the Charleston Resilience Network (CRN) and how CRN is leveraging participation and support from federal, state and local entities. Mr. Burger will also discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with coordinating a volunteer–based coalition.
- Mark Wilbert, Emergency Manager for the City of Charleston, will discuss the City’s challenges associated with flooding and sea level rise. Mr. Wilbert will also discuss his experience integrating climate and coastal hazard science with emergency preparedness activities, providing examples of collaboration and joint efforts that have yielded tangible results, including the City’s Sea Level Rise Strategy.
- Rick DeVoe, Executive Director of S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, will discuss societal trends, research and opportunities for improved analysis of coastal hazards to improve resilience planning. The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium has been involved with issues related to coastal storms, hazards, and resilience in the decades following landfall of Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Since that time, there have been numerous scientific and technical studies, analyses, and reports conducted and prepared which document climate and weather events and their potential to inflict harm and damage to property, infrastructure, and, of course, public health and safety. In many cases, these studies are broad in nature and wide in spatial scale. What has been lacking is attention to the effects of these large–scale phenomena at the local, community, and neighborhood levels. The October 2015 South Carolina flooding events underscored this issue. The need for down– scaling and localizing our research, mapping, and public engagement will be highlighted, which will be illustrated through two recent program initiatives being managed by the Consortium on behalf of the Charleston Resilience Network.
- Liz Fly, Ph. D., Coastal Climate Extension Specialist with S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, will discuss CRN’s stakeholder engagement efforts. Local community resilience is best achieved when the right information is provided to the right people. This involves a concerted effort around both research and engagement at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales. The Charleston Resilience Network (CRN) fosters partnerships among researchers and decision makers, bridging a common communication gap. This portion of the talk will describe CRN–led engagement and outreach efforts in the Charleston, SC, region, including a new initiative supported by a NOAA grant to increase regional capacity to respond to water–related hazards. This talk will describe the process of this project, from localizing flood models to how the CRN is engaging communities in order to receive and act upon this information.