

Incorporating Climate Change into Conservation Planning: An Approach and Tools You Can Use

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The Southeast is the fastest growing region in the country, especially along the coast. While conservation practitioners and local planners are making strides to protect valuable lands and habitat from development and related stressors, climate change is altering the way coastal conservation is approached over the long term. Additionally, conservation plans that target lands or habitats offering natural protective benefits represent an important climate adaptation strategy. To help lessen the gap between land conservation theory and practice when considering climate change, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed two new resources, which will be highlighted in this presentation. They offer a step-wise approach to considering climate change in coastal conservation planning, with links to relevant tools, information and other resources. The on-line version outlines how to do the steps, and provides quick access to the most applicable tools when working through each step. For users who need more guidance on the “how” and “why” of each step, there is a full guide with a robust list of possible tools and resources. The steps should be familiar to those already practicing strategic conservation planning, but unlike other guides, these new resources specifically focus on climate and habitat considerations of coastal environments. The resources can be used to create a new conservation plan if one is needed, to update an existing plan, or to further other types of planning, such as hazard mitigation or comprehensive plans. These resources can be found on NOAA’s Digital Coast under <https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/topic/green-infrastructure>.