



Presenter

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Building the "last mile" between data sources and decision makers

Government agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofits develop adaptation tools without adequately considering the capacity, needs, and contexts of end users at the local government level. Wetlands Watch, working with local governments for over a dozen years, has developed a strategic approach for bridging this gap, building the “last mile” in the adaption ecosystem. Just as commercial IT operations focus on the “last mile,” the link between their backbone servers and the customer, a similar challenge faces the climate adaptation community. The challenge is developing the “last mile” in the adaptation ecosystem to deliver the tools, models, studies, viewers, and critical information to the end user/decision maker in a form that they can use, at a time when they need it.

Wetlands Watch’s dozen years of sea level rise adaptation work at the local government level has resulted in a system of information delivery designed to provide adaptation resources to decision makers in local contexts that maximize implementation actions. We conduct needs assessments of local decision makers to better focus resources on adaptation challenges and engage in partnerships with upstream information providers. We have developed our own locality specific products (Virginia Locality Adaptation Guide), and technologies (Sea Level Rise Smart Phone App). We have provided local staff with leverage points for action (locality-specific FEMA program consultation), developed a system to bring academic resources to address local government needs (Collaboratory), and leveraged the private sector (Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional training and certification program).