How to Engage Communities

One Size Does Not Fit All

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How Can We Engage Our Communities?

• Recognize:
  – Independent municipalities
  – Different needs for each community
  – Different types of environments
    • Valley prone to flooding
    • Steep slopes
    • Low lying areas
    • Rural vs. Urban
  – Different areas of concern
  – Different community demographics
  – Different capacity (paid staff vs. volunteer boards)
Meet People Where They Are

• Establish credibility
  – Share local scientific data (understandable)
  – Explain why we need to think about adaptation strategies

• Maintain Trust
  – Let them know you are there to help
  – Share local stories

• Stay Available
  – Maintain on going engagement
Action must....

- Be rooted in local knowledge
- Respond to local needs/concerns
- Reflect local culture and values
How Do Communities Begin?

• Start community conversations
• It’s all very local – we know our community!
• Learn from each other – share stories!
• Incorporate climate science into the standard planning tools (future projections)
• Seek project funding & support from collaborative staff
Outcomes

• Building community capacity through participation and dialog
• Incorporating climate concepts into current planning efforts
• Providing decision support
• Improving disaster and emergency response planning

“We need a ‘three-town adaptation working group’ to engage more people in our communities about climate change.”
How Can We Help?

• Coordinating service providers - communities aren’t overwhelmed
• Bringing different perspectives and skill sets to communities
• Providing local data & facilitation
• Supporting networks and discussions by hosting workshops/forums
• LISTENING
Important to Remember!!!

• Engagement takes time
• People need to be educated again and again
• Communities need help: science, technical assistance, field trips, case studies…
Together

• You
• Academia - research
• Communities
• Non-profits
• Businesses
• Government