Collaborating for Climate Adaptation Planning: A Case Study of the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (NHCAW)

Our Coasts, Our Future, Our Choice
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Photo: Heidi Duncanson, Rye
Late 2000s: recognition of need to prepare for climate change in NH coastal region

2009 NH Climate Action Plan—mitigation AND adaptation

But... a lot of talk and little action

Therefore, let’s do something!

Water, Weather, Climate, Community series
NHCAW: Membership
22 organizations in 42 communities
NHCAW: Mission and vision

- Assist NH coastal watershed communities to prepare for impacts of extreme weather and long term climate change
- Provide resources, facilitation, guidance
- Vision: Resourceful, ready, resilient communities
NHCAW: Successes

- Increased understanding of climate change impacts in NH Seacoast (16 workshops and climate summit, 700 participants)
- NHCAW seen as a trusted resource
- Resources to help coastal communities: 46 projects; more than $5,000,000 project funding
- Successful research proposals
- Bringing science to policy/decision-making
- Network approach to collaborative problem-solving
- Co-production approach to generating knowledge
- 2015 EPA Environmental Merit Award
- Featured in Coastal States Org’s Resilient Communities
NHCAW: Research

- Survey and semi-structured interviews
- 80% response rate to survey (35/44 individuals)
- 18 interviews
- Participant observation
NHCAW: Function over structure

Ad-hoc: independent and without any constraints

- No MOU or operating procedures
- No Robert’s Rules of Order

Backbone support: 2 Co-Chairs and Chair of Outreach

- Leadership and facilitation
- Nurture network: Fun and compassionate
- Flat organization: equal in decision-making
- Constant communication
- Face-to-face meetings: Full NHCAW and subgroups
NHCAW: Inclusive participation

- Ad-hoc: Participation is voluntary and not monitored.

Membership rules and norms

- New membership process

- It’s Work!!! Meet frequently and have to do work

- Help people participate- how can we help you?

Photo: Amy Hansen, Hampton
NHCAW: Co-produce knowledge

- Experience with education and outreach
- Community needs ➔ CAW ➔ grant ➔ CAW
- NHCAW is an engine! A network, not an owner
- Focus: meeting objectives, not building organization
- Improving communication

Photo: Jason McKibben
NHCAW: Learning network

- Desire for continuous improvement: speakers
- Need for performance measures

- Post analysis of every activity
- Incorporate feedback into future event planning

Photo: Nathalie Morison, Seabrook
Thank You!

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Photo: Dan Gobbi, Seabrook