Telling a Local Story: Thematic, State-Based Roundtables with Congressional District Staffers

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Many Goals, People, Places, Partners, and Needs: One Mission
Regional Collaboration Network

North Atlantic (Virginia to Maine)

10 coastlines, 12 states, 70 million people (80% in coastal counties)

81 NOAA facilities, 9,215 employees (~4,100 excluding DC/Silver Spring)
To identify, communicate, and respond to regional needs, catalyze collaboration and connect people and capabilities to advance NOAA’s mission and priorities.

**Line of Sight:**

**COMMERCE**

**Strategic goals**

**GOAL 5 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**
Deliver better services, solutions, and outcomes that benefit the American people

**OBJ. 5.1: Strengthen organizational capabilities to drive customer-focused, outcomes-driven mission performance**

**NOAA**

**Top priorities for 2014-2016**

**ACHIEVE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**
Focus on people, teams and tools to advance organizational excellence

**NOAA Regional Collaboration Goals**

Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources

Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action

Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA’s broad mission and regional capabilities
GOAL: Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA’s broad mission and regional capabilities

- Foster meaningful interaction among headquarters, regional staff, and partners by serving as effective and impartial liaisons
- Assist in developing and tailoring NOAA’s engagement strategies for the regional implementation of national policies
- Elevate the visibility and value of NOAA through strategic partnerships and communications
- Create and identify opportunities to build a more informed NOAA workforce
Engagement Needs

- Strategic partnerships are essential to NOAA’s success
- Lack of NOAA-wide coordinated legislative or intergovernmental engagement strategy in the North Atlantic
  - Engagement on the Hill is most common
  - Capacity and interest in region varies (some parts of NOAA do it often and well, some not at all)
- Congressional district staff have a NEED for information about NOAA capabilities and products
  - They are working to solve problems on the ground
  - They want government to work better for their constituents
  - They need information, connections and partners to get their job done
Where to Engage??

- More time consuming, more people involved
- More expensive to get practitioners in the room
- Many competing priorities (less flexible, less time available)
- Avg Hill staffer: Younger, wears many hats, may or may not be from district, don’t regularly engage with constituents

- Most time is dedicated to organizing the roundtable
- Inexpensive since most travelers are local
- Schedule when Congress is in session and you will get commitments
- Avg District staffer: Older, usually with history in the community, all do work with constituents

Image credit: Julie Stuart
NART Congressional Roundtables

- Ongoing regional ‘One NOAA’ engagements with district congressional staff
- Agenda built on state needs
  - Start with the place, and the people who know and work there. They select theme.
  - Partner pairings bring life to NOAA science and services
- Interactive portions give meaning to the message
By the Numbers

- 70 NOAA
- 135 Partners
- 8 States
- 56 Staffers
- 39 Congressional Offices
Regional Expertise Directory

- Proof of concept searchable database ([whoyounoaa.us](http://whoyounoaa.us)) to identify NOAA expertise in the N Atlantic
- NOAA employees ‘opt in’ by entering contact info, expertise, and indicate which Fed, tribal, state and NGO partners they work with
FY17 Activities

- Expansion and distribution of WhoYouNOAA
- Additional roundtables in Maryland, New York, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania (Phila.)
- Continued maintenance of staff/partner list
- Plan on expanding to tribes (development of regional tribal engagement strategy)
Summary of Outcomes

- Congressional staffers get information and access
- NOAA gets:
  - Advocates for our work, both within and outside of NOAA
  - Opportunities to leverage activities and collaborate further with partners and with each other
  - More engagement with participating Congressional offices (both in-region and at HQ)
- The public gets good government; the collaboration of civil servants for the greater good helps everyone.
Questions