National Nature-Based Solutions Roadmap - Lydia Olander

The Biden-Harris Administration released a national nature-based solutions roadmap in fall of 2022 and has since taken a number of actions to elevate and accelerate the deployment of nature-based solutions. The roadmap includes coastal actions, but is broader. This talk will provide an overview of this roadmap and discuss many of the policy, funding, and other actions the administration has taken.

Quantifying Impacts of Nature-Based Solutions through the National Coastal Resilience Fund Dashboard - Ross Weaver

Since its inception in 2018, the National Coastal Resilience Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), has supported more than 400 projects to restore and enhance nature-based solutions with a total conservation impact of over $900 million dollars. With a broad scope of work spanning across the U.S., NFWF has funded a range of nature-based solutions over diverse geographies and at a variety of scales. To better illustrate this collective impact, NFWF has developed a suite of tools to quantify the multiple benefits that nature-based solutions provide, including a Dashboard highlighting both ecological and socioeconomic metrics such as habitat restoration, job creation, properties benefitting from enhanced protection, and avoided property damage.

Attendees will learn about the collective impact of National Coastal Resiliency Fund projects, while being introduced to tools and methodologies that help to quantify the benefits of nature-based approaches. In addition to demonstrating these new resources, this presentation will identify opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders in the coastal restoration community of practice.

The Legal Concept of Fault Attribution and Coastal Climate Change Policy in the United States - Chad McGuire

This paper looks at current federal disaster assistance in the United States under the jurisprudential legal framework of fault attribution. Under a fault attribution framework, increasing coastal hazard risks should equate to increasing transfer of risk to the private individuals from public assistance. As coastal hazards and risks become more normalized through the processes of climate change, they should be incorporated into the decision-making processes of private individuals and markets. Using data from the US government on federal disaster assistance appropriations from 1968 thru 2023, a base analysis can be done to determine if responsibility for coastal hazard damages is shifting from national public relief to private markets. The results indicate this is not happening, as federal disaster assistance appropriations have increased substantially in the past two decades. The results indicate that while coastal areas in the United States are becoming more dangerous because of climate change, public policy has yet to begin shifting responsibility for that danger from public assistance to private individuals. This suggests individuals may be relying on federal disaster assistance in their coastal risk assessment, implying a lot of coastal economic activity is dependent on federal subsidies such as national disaster assistance. Recommendations include

updating public policies to better reflect a dynamic fault attribution; as increased hazards become more normal, federal disaster relief must also allow increased coastal damages to be borne by private individuals and markets.

An Environmental Shift at the Army Corps: the PR&G and Ecosystem Services in BCAs - Derek Brockbank

In February 2024, the Federal Register published "Agency Specific Procedures" for the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to implement the "Principles, Requirement and Guidelines" (PR&G) for water resource projects. This long-awaited rulemaking (updating the 1983 "Principles & Guidelines") directs USACE to develop projects with a fundamentally different value proposition than it previously had. Rather than seeking to "contribute to national economic development", USACE must now "1) maximize sustainable economic development; 2) …avoid the unwise use of floodplains…; and 3) protect and restore functions of natural systems."

Just two weeks later, the Office of Management and Budget issued "Guidance for Assessing Changes in Environmental and Ecosystem Services in Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)." This guidance tells all federal agencies how to include environmental values when determining the monetary value of a project, program, or regulation. Since a BCA is often the most influential deciding factor in what actions are taken by an agency, ensuring all environmental values are included is essential to long term sustainability.

These rules are wonky. They are procedures for how the USACE analyzes its own work. However, if implemented properly, they have the potential to completely change how USACE develops and decides on coastal projects, which could change the landscape of our nation's shoreline. This presentation will explain in some detail what each rule is likely to do and will provide a perspective on what this might mean for coastal managers and practitioners who work with USACE on coastal projects and programs.

The Paris Agreement: Alignment of Climate, Coastal Restoration, and Resilience Goals - Terry-Rene W Brown

The Paris Agreement, the landmark agreement on climate change, was adopted by 195 countries and the European Union in 2015. The presentation will focus on how the Paris Agreement works, the progress made so far, and the extent to which biodiversity and natural systems are protected in the process. In the past several years, there has been an increasing recognition of the roles that oceans and coastal systems play in both climate mitigation and resilience. Examples of this will be provided, including information from the latest Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue and from the 2050 Vision and the Ocean for Climate Declaration. Additionally, as of late 2023, more than half of Paris Agreement pledges, known as Nationally Determined Contributions, included at least one coastal- or marine-based climate action. We will discuss some of these goals including restoration and protection of mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes. We will also discuss the UN's Race to Resilience, which aims to increase the resilience of 4 billion people and, when possible, protect natural systems in the process.

Overall, the increased alignment of Paris Agreement goals with conservation and sustainable development goals results in greater progress, inclusion, and efficiency. For example, mangrove and seagrass protection and restoration efforts may provide multiple benefits including carbon storage and sequestration, improved coastal resiliency, biodiversity protection, fisheries protection, and economic growth of local communities.