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Helping Connecticut Towns Plan for Climate Change

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Helping Connecticut Towns Plan for Climate Change

A Coastal Climate Adaptation Training Workshop at Avery Point

by Juliana Barrett and Jennifer Pagach

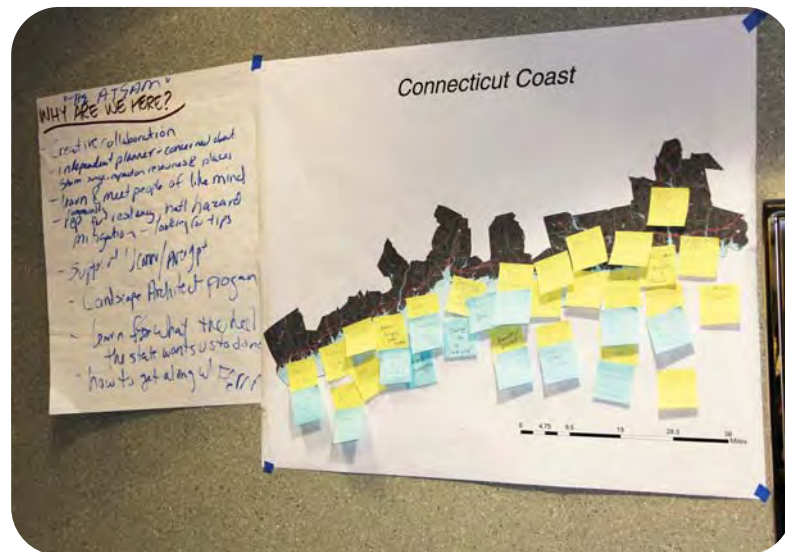


Climate change adaptation and resiliency have taken center stage in coastal municipalities recently, perhaps due in part to the damage that many coastal areas experienced during Tropical Storm Irene and Superstorm Sandy. In an effort to help Connecticut towns better adapt to the impacts associated with climate change and improve their overall resiliency, Connecticut Sea Grant, UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) and Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) sponsored a NOAA Climate Adaptation training workshop for coastal communities on May 14 to 16, 2013 at UConn Avery Point. This three-day course led by NOAA instructors provided in-depth information on the topic, as well as the opportunity for participants to apply what they learned to their own adaptation projects.

The course covered understanding climate science and impacts, determining community vulnerabilities, communicating effectively, identifying adaptation strategies, and finding mechanisms to implement those strategies. Local speakers came from a broad range of organizations including the NOAA National Weather Service, Milone & MacBroom (a civil engineering consulting firm), The Nature Conservancy, and Connecticut DEEP. These speakers provided Connecticut-specific information and examples. Numerous state and federal officials joined in the last day to describe services and opportunities for municipalities pertaining to climate change and hazard resilience.

Towns represented included Groton, East Lyme, Waterford, Old Lyme, Fairfield, Milford, Greenwich, Weston, Westbrook, Madison, Norwalk, and Branford. In addition, the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments and some consulting firms joined in.

Hands-on exercises illustrated how challenging it can be to coordinate and execute climate adaptation work. Participants also toured adjacent Shennecosset Beach to examine the impacts from Superstorm Sandy and witness resource restoration efforts currently underway. Attendees left the workshop with the knowledge that they have multiple valuable resources to work with, and a community of climate change partners that they can continue to turn to for mutual support and guidance.



FOR MORE INFORMATION on climate change, or if you are interested in climate education and training opportunities, please contact Juliana Barrett, 860-405-9106, Jennifer Pagach at 860-424-3295, or Bruce Hyde, 860 345-5229.