

NYSG Training Extension & Agencies in Climate Literacy

Climate change is poised to impact coastal ecosystems and economies in New York State. Most extension educators lack sufficient expertise in climate change to accurately communicate it to their audiences, particularly audiences that may be skeptical about climate change and incredulous of scientific information. Extension professionals need to be better informed about climate science and must also be trained in communication tools that will improve technology transfer and decision making among their coastal community stakeholders. Unfortunately, there have been few training opportunities on climate change for extension educators.

With funding from the NOAA Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (CCCAI), NY Sea Grant (NYSG) organized a two-day climate literacy training workshop in 2010 for 42 extension educators offering programming in natural resources, agriculture, consumer education, and youth education, and for staff from the National Weather Service. This NYSG workshop effectively integrated information on climate science with potential impacts of climate change and stakeholder communication strategies.

The evaluations indicate the workshop was highly successful in preparing the educators to communicate climate change impacts to meet their audiences' information needs.

Participants identified the workshop as their most comprehensive and effective climate change training and committed to:

- integrate the workshop information into their existing curricula,



Climate Change Literacy workshop organizers and participants included NY Sea Grant, Cornell University, Northeast Regional Climate Center and National Weather Service personnel: (back row l to r) David MacNeill, Allison Chatrychan, Katherine McComas, Holly Menninger, Chuck O'Neill; (front row l to r) David Nicosia, Art DeGaetano, Bruce Lewenstein, David Wolfe. Photo: Kara Lynn Dunn, NYSG

- relay information directly to colleagues,
- develop companion climate change workshops for their colleagues using the NYSG workshop as a model, and
- establish a Statewide Climate Change Program Work Team, within the Cornell University system, to solidify the bridge between Sea Grant and Land Grant programs.

As a direct result of this workshop, extension educators in New York State are now better positioned to develop clearly focused climate change outreach and adaptation strategies for diverse audiences.

New York Sea Grant is actively engaged in climate change outreach coordination in both Great Lakes and marine program environments.

This project meets the performance measures of Sea Grant's Hazard Resilience in Coastal Communities focus area. Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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