

Communicating About Flood Risks to Real Estate Market Segments in Coastal New Jersey

Dr. Clinton J. Andrews
Principal Investigator
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning
and Public Policy
Rutgers, The State University
of New Jersey
848-932-2808
cja1@rutgers.edu

Dr. Robert Kopp
Co-Principal Investigator
Department of Earth and
Planetary Sciences
Rutgers, The State University
of New Jersey
732-200-2705
robert.kopp@rutgers.edu

Additional Investigators:
Ms. Jeanne Herb
Dr. David Listokin
Dr. Jennifer Senick
Dr. Marc Weiner
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning
and Public Policy
Rutgers, The State University
of New Jersey



Team leaders Clinton Andrews (left) and Robert Kopp (right)

Much scientific information about coastal flood risks and sea level rise has been developed using a “science-push” model of expert advising. Led by Dr. Clinton Andrews, an urban planner and Dr. Robert Kopp, a sea level researcher, this project will bring to bear a “demand-pull” perspective. Building upon the best available sea level rise projections for New Jersey, developed in part under a previous New Jersey Sea Grant project, the research team will focus on the needs, interests, and capabilities of different coastal decision makers and investigate what decision makers in coastal real estate markets want to know about and how they understand coastal flood risk.

By focusing on the demand for sea level rise and coastal flood risk information, the project aims to improve the effectiveness of scientific communication. It will characterize coastal real estate decision making in enough detail to allow communications to be targeted to relevant sub-audiences. It will bring new awareness of flood risks to market actors deciding whether to rent or buy seasonal or year-round homes. It will engage the real estate appraisal community in a serious exploration of better ways to incorporate flood risk information into valuation processes.

Following a “rapid prototyping” approach, the project will begin by convening focus groups with key coastal real estate actors in order to characterize their decision processes and how flood risk information enters those processes. After synthesizing examples of best practices in scientific communication about coastal flood risks, it will apply these practices for use in a follow-on set of focus groups with the same stakeholders to gauge their effectiveness.

The project will then engage appraisers, a key enabling group, and survey members of their professional organization about the efficacy of alternative flood-risk communication strategies. A group of Rutgers graduate students in a planning studio course will pilot these risk communication strategies in a New Jersey coastal community. Finally, project participants will disseminate results in conference presentations and publications, and via Climate Central’s Surging Seas website.



Some real estate market participants find it difficult to assess the vulnerability of coastal properties to storm damage.