

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series II

Funder Briefing: #5

Date: October 7, 2013

Topic: Post-Sandy Environmental Issues and Climate Change Effects on NJ (webinar)

Speakers: **Mark Mauriello**, Former Commissioner - NJ Department of Environmental Protection, and Director of Environmental Affairs and Planning - Edgewood Properties;

Tim Dillingham, Executive Director - The American Littoral Society;

Jeanne Herb, Associate Director - Environmental Analysis and Communications Group at the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University;

Marjorie Kaplan, PhD, Associate Director - Rutgers Climate Institute

HIGHLIGHTS

Announcements:

- Oct 15th - Center for Disaster Philanthropy - webinar
- Oct. 18th - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Culture of Health Forum will focus on Mental Health and Sandy Recovery at the Toms River Barnabas Behavioral Health Center

Overview - *Tim Dillingham* - [The American Littoral Society](#)

- In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy we have an opportunity to readjust parts of our relationship with the coast in ways that make us more resilient.
- Goal is to ensure, as we look at policies, that rebuilding happens quickly AND responsibly, without putting homes and businesses back in harm's way. In ways that:
 - promote resiliency
 - respond to the future changes we know are coming to the environment and along the coast
 - make wise investments
- Changing fundamental footprint of vulnerability along the coast - we haven't looked back at State's coastal development policies and instead are rushing back into the same places.
- Working in collaborations with [Clean Ocean Action](#), [Nature Conservancy](#) and [NJ/NY Baykeeper](#) on nature-based defenses, as well as working with [Army Corps of Engineers](#), [NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection](#).
 - Where healthy dune systems and tidal marshes often received less damage - nature based defenses should be restored, strengthened and maintained
 - Beach nourishment projects and home elevation is helping, but we're really look at mitigation steps not resiliency
- Decision makers - some positive signs, techniques and fundamental research is being undertaken at the state level. NYC in particular did a great job of bringing a diverse group of people together to suggest solutions
- find a surprising recognition at grassroots level that things need to change - we can stay positive and harness this understanding to set the stage for policy changes

Pre- and post-Sandy public perception and awareness - Mark Mauriello - Edgewood Properties

- This storm has brought public awareness and education of the vulnerability and risk for coastal and floodplain residents and municipalities to make informed decisions, and hopefully will influence policy and spending at the state level, as well.
- Sea level has risen over 1.3 feet in the last 100 years in NJ. Flood plains are expanding horizontally, flood heights are increasing. Sediment problems along beach.
- Good things that have happened:
 - Adoption of stricter construction standards is key to reducing damage to future building
 - Property acquisition in the Raritan Bay, particularly Sayreville, and in Passaic basin - NJ has a great track record of doing that
 - Mobilization of the advocates - rallied environmental advocates and those that don't always work together (environmental and housing advocates, higher education, etc.)

Areas for improvement:

Land use / buffer zones

- Haven't seen a move to acquire vulnerable ocean front property; particularly in northern Ocean County, Toms River, Ortley Beach (road and several lines of homes destroyed - could pull back during reconstruction there), and Mantoloking - very little discussion about pulling those homes back, which are currently a 100+ feet seaward of the road.
- Haven't seen discussion at State level about land use management and/or changes that might be appropriate in these communities ([home rule](#) is a challenge) but State oversight could be brought to bear ([Transfer of development rights](#) and other tactics could get more people out of harm's way)
- Shore protection response to the storm - beach nourishment is temporary, costly, and carries equity issues (who has access vs. who is paying for the nourishment). Similarly, proposals for armoring of beaches are a dangerous path - building sea walls and structures ties us into a lot more spending and false sense of safety.

Planning

- There is a great need to ramp up coastal planning using regional long-term planning that ignores the political boundaries of communities
- Transparency and accountability very important to track the spending of relief and recovery dollars so we can improve in the future.
- Policy analysis: funders could support a study of land use decisions and how those contributed to or prevented losses

Webinar - Jeanne Herb - [Environmental Analysis and Communications Group](#) and Dr. Marjorie Kaplan - [Rutgers Climate Institute](#)

See accompanying [Slide show](#) [start at 33:45 on CNJG website]

- Future weather:
 - Tide data for Atlantic City shows the rate of rise is higher than the global rate. 16 inches in 100 years, land is subsiding due to compaction of sediments in coastal plains from ground water withdrawal.
 - Even without any changes in storm intensity the rise in sea level will make the impact of regular coastal storms greater
 - Extreme events - hurricanes will likely increase in strength, frequency of most intense storms expected to increase
- Climate Change Impacts in NJ
 - Vulnerable sectors: Built infrastructure, water resources, public health & society, agriculture, coastal, the natural environment

- Climate changes will affect certain populations more than others: elderly, children, poor (no air conditioning, pre-existing health disparities), urban communities (contamination from polluted sites, need for mass transit, heat island effect), outdoor workers, people with mental health issues, people subject to coastal and inland flooding
- Coordination with surrounding states - engaged in northeast and mid-Atlantic on planning strategies because NJ is behind other states in plans

Funder Recommendations

- Prevention / Mitigation: Reducing the emissions that cause climate change
 - Look to State Climate Action Plans
 - Reduce emissions from stationary emitters (power plants) and mobile emitters (cars)
 - Put a price on emissions, increase energy efficiency, enhance carbon sinks, etc.
- Adaptation:
 - State Adaptation plans (NJ doesn't have one currently) - so formed the [New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance](#)
 - Working on public policy recommendations using a very deliberative process, with impact data and leading practices, stakeholder engagement, policy gap analysis summary, sector specific workshops and finalizing policy recommendations.
- Low hanging fruit - if funders are working through the [NJ Recovery Fund](#) - activities funding by this one is really filling the gaps where no other funding is provided.
- Broadly share [The Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#) / CNJG philanthropic disaster response playbook when complete because learning and best practices will be collected in one place
- Public education:
 - Provide informed experts in the communities
 - Bring communities together for informed discussions including assessment of risk and vulnerability - akin to the work that [Creative New Jersey](#) is doing. Funding community and NJ Recovery Fund are the only ones doing it - need to scale up.
 - preparing/made available demonstrated best practices and personal assistance in working with them
 - Much of what is going on now is not transparent - it's a government conversation, but not involving residents.
- Funders can help bring together cross sector groups/stakeholder for collaboration, such as the [Common Ground Initiative](#)
- Not everyone is going to get insurance or funding to elevate their homes - we are limited in our ability to fall back in the "old way" of doing things, so we will probably start to see a demand for a different governance framework - municipalities by their nature cannot think and plan regionally.

Beginning on the first Monday after Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers began hosting weekly conference calls for grantmakers in-state and nationwide, facilitated by CNJG President Nina Stack, to discuss their response to Sandy and strategies facing NJ as a result of the storm. Each conference call briefing offered expert guest speakers who represented government agencies (FEMA, HUD, HHS, etc.), national philanthropic leaders, expert psychologists with experience in PTSD, planners and community redevelopment leaders, and representatives from NJ's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, among others. The twenty-five audio files and written summaries are available at: <http://cnjg.org/hurricane-sandy>