

## Draft Summary

### Ohio SARP Climate Change Focus Group

Two focus groups were conducted at the University of Toledo's Lake Erie Center by the Ohio Sea Grant Program: one on February 10, 2009 for representatives of commercial ports and marina interests and a second on February 17, 2009 for stormwater managers and community planners. Seventeen people participated in the two focus groups.

The focus Group sessions were recorded with the informed consent of those participating for detailed analysis. What follows are some initial ideas, observations, and interpretation of the responses given to the focus group questions.

Q1: What are the planning windows for your organization, agency or business?  
(short term – 1 to 5 years, intermediate – 6 to 15 years, long term greater than 15 years)  
What percent of your yearly FTE is spent on each planning window?  
What percent of your yearly budget is spent on each planning window?

Most respondents look at planning only in the short term (1 to 5 years). Only two looked at planning in intermediate terms and only one respondent talked of long term planning over 15 years. Personnel and budgets for planning were limited or non-existent.

Q2: What areas of management/operation are most vulnerable to climate change impacts?

Ports & marinas respondents were interested in and concerned about short term lake levels, water levels, storm events and sediment dredging that might impact cargo movement. Stormwater respondents were concerned about and interested in sewer systems, storm events, land use, wetlands, the ability to generalize data from other geographic areas, and the use of historical data for planning and forecasting that may or may not apply as climate and conditions change.

Q 3: What specific forecasting resources do you currently use in making management decisions?  
Where do you go for information?

Ports & marinas respondents were more interested in immediate dredging issues than in forecasting. They look to a variety of possible sources of information (USACE, Sea Way Corporation, Universities, USDOT, Great Lakes Transportation etc.) Storm water respondents look more to the past and not to forecasting. They also use a variety of information sources including USGS, FEMA maps, ARS, citizen complaints, NOAA NWS etc. They would like to have forecasts model outputs for climate change impacts.

Q4: What forecasting information do you use in making management decisions?  
How do you want to receive your information?

Ports & marinas respondents looked to weather buoys, weather forecasts, personal observations and other short term information. They used radio, cell phone, a web system, satellite data and experience as ways to receive information. Some places on the water are dead zones without cell

phone service. Stormwater managers would like to have some forecasting but the model output would have to be highly reliable. They prefer a free searchable website that has local information. National information is not much use. Economic Benefit/cost analysis on a regional or local level is desired for local infrastructure planning.

Q5: What specific climate change forecasting needs are met with current data and modeling capacity?

Separate REAL-TIME VS Intermediate/long-term FORECASTING

- a) What data are you using that is climate related data?
- b) Where are you getting current information? (primary/secondary/tertiary level info suppliers)

Ports & marinas respondents were leery of long term forecasting to make decisions. Investing in new marinas and new ships is very expensive and port & marina people want solid reliable information for decision making. Stormwater respondents did not feel that their needs for climate change forecasting were being met. They need local /regional information. Climate related information they use includes rainfall data, lake level data, stream flow data, water quality data (pollution loads), storm duration & frequency and temperature data. They get information from rainfall stations, NOAA – NWS, USACE (lake levels), FEMA USGS, personal observations, etc.

Q6: How could current modeling results be used in decision making to adapt to climate change?

Ports & marinas respondents could use modeling results to help locate and design facilities, help reduce uncertainty in decision making, improve long term planning and forecast need for commodities. The reliability of the models and politics are a concern of the port group. Storm water respondents could use modeling to help determine design standards, help locate and site facilities, predict flooding, runoff intensity, and assess impacts on agricultural practices and more.

Q7: What type and magnitude of weather/climate/water event (storm intensity/duration, high/low water, longer/shorter boating season, ice thickness/duration) would cause major problems in your operation?

What would cause changes in your management/operations practices?

What would cause changes in your operational strategies?

Commercial mariners are concerned with even a one inch drop in lake levels as it impacts the amount of cargo vessels can carry. A two foot drop in lake levels would be very significant to marinas in the western basin. Lower lake levels would necessitate even more expensive dredging. Where is the political will to fund the dredging? Lower lake results in less beach as beaches are eroded by intense storms. Planning for intense storms is needed. What is typical? What to expect in the future? Need new designs. Need good reliable modeling results for decision makers. Need to know how changing climate could impact infrastructure and the location of new infrastructure. Need reliable data to make decisions on flood prevention & stormwater management.

Q 8: What specific information do you need to begin planning and preparing for adoption to climate change in your day-to-day management responsibilities?

Port respondents are most concerned with short term events. Long term shipping contracts are a thing of the past. Wind, rain, and frequency of events are important to shippers. Stormwater managers are concerned about the intensity of events and getting data specific to local areas. Data needs to be reliable. Information needs to be user friendly.

Q9: Is there anything else?

Professional associations may need to be involved in support of the modeling output to get managers to use the new information.

Managers want to be sure of the data they use for decision making.

Both the magnitude and the time frame of occurring changes need to be known.

Need to have some information on the uncertainties in the modeling.

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