



SOUTHEAST & CARIBBEAN DISASTER RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

2020 MEETING REPORT

Charting a Path Towards a Resilient Future

January 28-29, 2020
Lexington Riverwalk Hotel & Conference Center
1515 Prudential Dr., Jacksonville, FL

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INTRODUCTION

Each year since its beginnings in 2015, the SCDRP has held workshops and meetings to bring together professionals and practitioners in disaster recovery operations and resilience planning. The partnership serves as a convening forum for information, knowledge, and update each other on lessons learned, best practices, and planning methods.

On January 28th and 29th in Jacksonville FL, the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership (SCDRP) convened professionals from a wide array of industries and sectors to come together and discuss pressing issues and trends in disaster resilience and recovery that affect the region. The meeting was held at the Lexington Hotel & Conference Center, Riverwalk in downtown Jacksonville, Florida.

Meeting Theme and Objectives

The theme of the meeting, *Charting a Path Towards a Resilient Future*, was meant to reflect the current situation of the SCDRP and its effort to evolve with the broadening scope of “resilience” and what it means in current trends of global change. As this group seeks a way to continue the momentum of the partnership, using its strengths inherent in the current network of members, it also recognizes the greater opportunity when looking beyond the scope of recovery. This theme also calls attention to ways in which resilience is rapidly becoming part of the calculus that influences decisions in governance, business development, economic security and insurance, community disaster recovery, infrastructure and housing issues, preservation of cultural assets, and natural resource use and sustainability. In addition to sessions and panels that focused on resilience as a topic in these various sectors, the SCDRP sponsored a speaker from the U.S. Caribbean to celebrate its membership expansion into the region.

This membership was built out of the scaffolding of multi-state projects that adapted their objectives to meet their resilience and recovery needs. Operating under the umbrella of the SCDRP, a program managed through the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA), these projects fueled the growth of the partnership and produced a highly diverse multi-sector network forged by regional efforts of recovery, emergency management planning, and the vision of a resilient future.

As the state-focused projects come to a close this year, the members of this growing group expressed the need and desire to maintain the organization given the growing opportunities and progress being made in resilience and recovery, and the long road yet to go. In this effort, the SCDRP also took advantage of the gathering to extract data for a strategic plan to better formalize the organization. Members suggested and voted on organizational objectives and identified features of the partnership that will help guide strategies to reach our goals.

Pointing to general industry and governance trends of putting more emphasis on resilience as a pathway towards economic and infrastructure sustainability, the meeting also allowed attendees to explore opportunities of finding ways to sustain the partnership, identify ways to be even more inclusive and retain the momentum of a growing, diversifying membership. Reducing duplication of effort with other groups in a climate of diminishing resources emphasized the importance of finding ways to work with organizations that have overlapping interests to strengthen the foundations and long-term sustainability for the SCDRP.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- 1- Highlight and demonstrate benefits and positive outcomes of recovery and resilience efforts developed through partnership organizations;
- 2- Obtain building blocks from members to draft the SCDRP strategic plan;
- 3- Formally expand the partnership-region to include U.S. Territories in the Caribbean;
- 4- Further strengthen and expand a multi-sector resilience and recovery network;
- 5- Share information on pressing resilience and recovery issues in the Southeast and Caribbean region;
- 6- Provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss and share resilience best practices and highlight regional needs in disaster recovery

Participants

Seventy-two people registered for this event, many of whom are already part of the SCDRP; however about half of the attendees were new to the group, joining within the last year, or had only recently heard of the partnership. New members were drawn to the SCDRP as seeing this group as among the only that encompasses a broad variety of sectors and industries that all in some way focus on the issue of resilience and disaster recovery in the Southeast and Caribbean region. Although not all registrants stayed through both days of the meeting, roughly between 55 and 65 people were present for both days.

Attendees represented the following organizations:

- AECOM
- Broward County, Environmental Planning & Community Resilience
- Chatham Emergency Management Agency
- City of New Orleans, Disaster Recovery Program
- City of St. Augustine
- City of Jacksonville
- Clearview Geographic, LLC
- Department of Defense
- East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Regions II & VI
- Fidelity National Financial
- Flagler College
- Flood Mitigation Industry Association
- Florida Governor's Office
- Genwest
- GA Department of Natural Resources
- Hagarty
- HALFF
- ICF
- ICF International
- Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program
- Institute for Sustainable Development
- Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety
- International Economic Development Council
- Jacksonville University
- JEA
- Lynker
- Miami-Dade Office of Resilience
- NOAA Disaster Preparedness Program
- NOAA Climate and Societal Interactions
- NOAA Office for Coastal Mgmt.
- NOAA Southeast & Caribbean Regional Team
- NC Office of Recovery and Resilience
- Northeast Florida Regional Council
- Regency Centers
- RS & H
- SC Sea Grant Consortium
- SAI Global
- Smart Home America
- South Carolina Office of the Adjunct General, Emergency Management Division
- Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA)
- Taylor Engineering
- The National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine, Gulf Research Program
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA)
- U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Disaster Assistance (SBA)
- U.S. Virgin Islands, Department of Planning and Natural Resources
- University of Florida
- WJCT Jacksonville Public Radio

SESSION SUMMARIES

Planning the two-day meeting was conducted through a committee of SCDRP members who volunteered to take the lead to develop session topics, find and invite speakers, provide feedback and make final decisions on suggestions and meeting flow. Their contribution was critical for making the meeting relevant and a great success. Finally, the purpose for the meeting would not exist without the consistent support and enthusiasm of the SCDRP members and the wise leadership of its Advisory Committee

Sessions formats were mixed. Some sessions were presentation-based with Q&A while other sessions were panel discussions among experts in the field. The meeting began with a few comments about the growth and trajectory of the SCDRP from Debra Hernandez, Director of the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA), the parent organization that hosts and manages the SCDRP, who introduced the Keynote speaker, Florida's Chief Resilience Officer. Sessions that followed are summarized below:

Finalizing SCDRP-Sponsored Work

Given that the SCDRP is at the juncture of closing out the state-based projects that sowed the seeds for the partnership, most of the morning focused on providing attendees with an overview and final outcomes of work conducted with the support of the SCDRP. Project leads from NC, SC, GA, and FL presented summaries of their work and documents that were produced. Speakers explained what they accomplished through the support of the SCDRP. Presenters discussed next

steps, lessons learned, or best practices that emerged out of this work. A summary of a white paper on business resilience sponsored by the SCDRP was also presented.

Student Research Presentation

To hear from a future professional of resilience, the lunch period of the first day included a presentation on ongoing research in the region being conducted through Jacksonville University. This work addresses

growing realizations by municipalities in the NE Florida region that continued development at current rates, without being guided by best practices in Low Impact Development (LID), poses a challenge to sustainable development.

Exploring the potential options for LID ordinances that would work for the region and communities in NE Florida, Jennifer John, master's student at Jacksonville University, and her advisor Dr. Quinton White, informed attendees on their current research on exploring specific methods that have proven effective in protecting water resources while sustaining responsible development that also preserves the benefits of natural systems. Plans to conduct GIS analyses and cost-benefit profiles as part of this work are ongoing, however expected completion is by end of summer 2020.

Public-Private Partnerships: Characteristics of P3 Success

Among the components of success for any organization is the concept of partnership. The concept of partnership has been incorporated into all kinds of efforts and in fact, very little progress is made in most efforts without some kind of support network. Awareness of the variety of partnership models in the current landscape of funding scarcity and understanding how to engage the whole community to support public-private partnerships (P3s) is important if organizations want to achieve the highest value out of their collective assets and avoid duplication of efforts and resource waste.

Initial outcomes exploring P3 types, conducted by the S.C. Sea Grant, found that local community leadership, shared goals, and opportunistic approaches, specifically exploiting current assets to generate stronger bonds and utilize the advantages provided by current relationships, seemed to be core characteristics of successful P3s.

Using the strengths of its members and framing a partnership as a collection of assets, building P3s through such organizations as the SCDRP directly increases social capacity in community resilience resources, while at the same time, expands the disciplinary expertise of the organization.

Disciplinary and sector diversity are important considerations that require some thought in a P3 because these factors reflect disciplinary, technical and management resources that can provide feedback on solutions brought up by members. Broader knowledge provides better decision-making in steering the partnership. Geographic similarities serve to bring the diversity to common ground, presenting shared challenges such as exposure to similar disasters and recovery barriers. Finally, successful P3s seem to focus on their power as a sum of the whole, backed by a community of diverse stakeholders who share similar visions of success.

Expanding the Partnership & Broadening the Scope, The Climate Community of Practice

The SCDRP shares some obvious overlap the Climate Community of Practice (CCoP), which, after an 11-year stint in activity, is also at a juncture of exploring options to move forward, very similar to the current circumstance of the SCDRP.

The SCDRP's emphasis on partnership and leveraging opportunities inherent in a strong network, places both the SCDRP and CCoP in a position to consolidate overlapping interests and efforts, and potentially join forces. Coming together as a larger group of partners would result in growing the network across disciplines and sectors, setting the stage for developing a collective vision and active co-participation in addressing resiliency issues, particularly in issues related to global change.

To highlight the potential of this opportunity from the perspective of the CCoP, Geno Olmi, coordinator and founding member of the group, gave a presentation on opportunities of finding ways for the two groups to officially come together, which could not only to strengthen the existing network, but also expand the interests and topic areas into climate adaptation and natural resource management and include these pieces of the resilience puzzle.

Particularly as the SCDRP contemplates its strategic plan, the opportunities are ripe to find a way forward together through increasing engagement with the CCoP and inviting them to partner in developing our strategic plan to ensure the priorities and objectives of both organizations are part of the equation in charting a way forward together.

Activity: Member-Driven Strategic Planning

Given the accomplishment of the SCDRP wrap-up on state projects, brought the partnership together, the we are exploring new and exciting ways forward to evolve into more formalized organization that seeks to serve as the primary forum for those working on resilience issues in the Southeast and Caribbean region. Surging public and private interests in disaster planning, and resilience and recovery processes and operations has created fertile grounds for organizations that can demonstrate cross-cutting disciplinary and multi-sector engagement in strengthening community resilience and capacity. These activities range from pre-disaster planning and post-disaster response.

At this juncture, the SCDRP has the opportunity to define ways forward and build on its network. Its leadership is currently focused on development and strategic planning, seeking to broaden its scope and ensure its sustainability and long-term stability.

With the diversity of sectors and interests represented by attendees, strategic planning activities designed to take full advantage of our captive audience and harvest individual feedback on potential

organizational objectives and key strategies to reach those goals that the partnership could embrace. These exercises were spread throughout both days.

To achieve a strategic plan, it is important to understand current assets and challenges in the partnership. To capture attendees' opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the SCDRP, SWOT worksheets were provided in meeting materials that could be filled out at leisure. These worksheets were later collected and will help provide an overview of the assets and handicaps the SCDRP needs to address in its plan.

Attendees were then asked to make note of their objectives on cards, which were later grouped into common themes and voted on by the participants. To brainstorm with the captive audience on how to achieve these objectives, they were polled using on-the-spot interactive polling, which allowed individual input on key strategies for each goal.

Data derived from these sessions will provide the basis out of which the SCDRP will draft its strategic plan, to be complete by the end of 2020.

Community Planning & Capacity Building

In this session, panelists from city governments and FEMA Region IV were brought together to discuss ways in which resilience is defined, the role of non-profits in recovery and resilience from their various chairs, and ways in which coordination of resilience efforts can reduce vulnerability to disasters and shorten recovery-time. This session was discussion-driven, and led by Sean Lahav of the NE Florida Regional Council.

Five panelists from local municipal government to FEMA provided their insights on how they navigate the meaning of resilience, what they see as the way forward, and how they coordinate this aspect of community planning and capacity building into the goals of their long-term and short-term efforts in generating community resilience and encouraging best practices.

Housing and Infrastructure

Housing and infrastructure are an ongoing concern when it comes to disaster recovery and planning. This presentation served to better understand how various improvements in building design and double-checking your personal insurance policies can drastically improve home preparedness. Speakers provided a summary on the direct benefits of securing your home in aspects of peace-of-mind, while also minimizing potential individual costs in the event of disasters that cause damage to infrastructure and homes.

With a focus on personal homes, this session with a presentation by Julie Shiyou-Woodard from Smart Home America, and Alex Cary from the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety provided valuable insight on how to make the most of

your options, and what kind of policy standards best serve the homeowner and through that, benefit community resilience on the whole.

Connecting Research to Practice

The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters has led to significant costs to infrastructure and economies, however with that, it has also sparked more scientific and academic research in various aspects of resilience. The speakers in this session discussed some of the environmental research efforts, and ways in which healthy natural systems can be integrated so that they serve to help protect infrastructure and reduce costs of disasters and recovery, while enhancing long-term resilience and ecosystem health. Benefits have already been proven from efforts of working *with* the natural environment rather than seeing it as “empty” or vacant space to be developed. Now, the effort focused on the concept of working with natural assets provided by the environment is also gaining ground on a national level, specifically, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and is actively being applied by state governments as well to enhance resilience.

In this session, we heard from Dr. Jeff King from the Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering with Nature division who provided us with some basics of what such projects and practices may entail. Jan MacKinnon, Coastal and Ocean Management Program Manager with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, then explained ways they have had great success in taking this approach, especially in consideration of long-term needs in disaster resilience.

Regional Trends in Resilience and Recovery

To highlight our expansion into the Caribbean in summer of 2019—geographically a very different place from the U.S. SE mainland, but which also endures similar disasters—a closer look at regional resilience issues, trends and needs provided some insight into both similarities and differences in recovery resources, policy and emergency management decisions across the region.

Beginning with a presentation by Hilary Lohmann, Coastal Resilience Coordinator for the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Natural Resources, attendees were informed on challenges and issues faced by small, relatively isolated territories whose limited access to resources and political representation puts their recovery issues into a category of their own when compared to similar challenges on the mainland. The presentation focused on three main trends in disaster recovery and resilience: 1-opportunities in pre- and post-disaster planning and risk management, 2-leveraging partnerships, and 3-incorporating nature-based resilience planning as a protective mechanism for infrastructure. Panelists Jon Philipsborn Assoc. Vice President, Climate Adaptation Practice Director with AECOM, Dr. Duane DeFreese, Executive

Director of the Indian River Lagoon Council & Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, and Dr. Leslee Keys, Director of Historic Preservation and Assistant Professor at Flagler College, then shared their perspectives on these three elements.

Panelists identified similar challenges in their work when it comes to moving towards developing long-term resilience and planning in their regions. They highlighted obstacles specific to their efforts to better protect both natural and cultural resources and increasing capacity and resilience, while at the same time explain ways they are working to succeed in pre-disaster planning and adaptation.

Accessing Federal Funding Streams for Disaster Recovery and Planning

As more national emphasis is placed on increasing community resilience when it comes to being able to manage challenges associated with disasters and climate change, new opportunities are emerging for individuals, businesses, and municipalities that seek assistance in home improvement, developing economic resilience and pre-disaster planning practices.

Among the primary challenges in disaster recovery and resilience is understanding where funding in the form of grants or low-interest loans may exist

and how to access these resources. Federal agencies and departments such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA) all have various assistance programs that are focused on disaster resilience and recovery efforts in the U.S. Given the new federal funding opportunities in disaster resilience and planning, eligibility, agency objectives, and scopes of interest are constantly changing in these organizations, as well as new opportunities for funding increasing with growing concerns from rapidly expanding climate and disaster impacts. Among one of the greatest barriers to accessing these resources that is claimed is the difficulty in navigating these various systems, and how eligibility is structured.

Gathering a panel of guest-speakers charged with some level of oversight on these funding opportunities, proved a unique occasion for attendees to gain valuable insight on how to be successful in seeking federal support for disaster-affected regions and organizations. Speakers explained eligibility parameters and how to improve chances of success when applying for needed support in disaster recovery or to ask for pre-disaster planning assistance. Speakers included David Vandewater from FEMA, Greg Vaday from EDA, and Frank McNally from HUD.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Day 1 Keynote: Dr. Julia Nesheiwat, Chief Resilience Officer, Florida Governor's Office.

To open the meeting, Dr. Julia Nesheiwat expressed concern about the progress made on resilience needs in Florida. Describing vulnerabilities specific to the state as well as the region, and the increase in frequency of extreme events and disasters and their associated recovery costs, it is clear that despite being a leader in advancing resilience compared to most other coastal states, Florida still has a significant way to go. Among the primary challenges in enhancing community resilience for FL, and which contributes to the greatest delays and barriers towards recovery operations in cases of disaster, is inter-agency and inter-sector coordination and better orchestration of assets among the stakeholders that get involved during recovery and mitigation efforts.

Day 2 Keynote: James Murley, Chief Resilience Officer, Miami-Dade County, FL Emergency Management

Mr. James Murley spoke to attendees about the process of developing the [Resilient305](#) plan, a multi-year effort that not only provides a guide to disaster planning and resilience in Miami-Dade, but also serves as an exemplary model for the steps that a municipality or organization may want to consider when developing its own emergency plan. Since its launch, the Resilient305 team conducted research with members from grassroots organizations, the community, businesses and academia to address the greatest challenges building and maintain a resilient future for the people who call Greater Miami and the Beaches their home.

SCDRP Guest: Hilary Lohmann, Coastal Resilience Coordinator, U.S.V.I. Dept. of Natural Resources

To mark the official inclusion of the U.S. Caribbean Territories as part of the area that will be embraced by the SCDRP, and indeed the reason for the inclusion of the "C" in the name since the summer of 2019, the SCDRP sponsored a speaker from the U.S. Virgin Islands. As the kick-off presentation for the Regional Resilience panel, her presentation provided some insight into the specific challenges and obstacles that are involved in recovery from recent hurricanes that swept the region, while also comparing and contrasting issues in resilience and planning.

PRESENTATION DOWNLOADS

All presentations are available for download on: <https://www.scdrp.secoora.org/resources>

SCDRP BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

• **The SCDRP Name: R for “Resilience”**

The SCDRP Board decided to change the name of the partnership. The “R” in the acronym will now stand for “Resilience” rather than “Recovery.” This decision was based on the current understanding that most of the opportunities in disaster management have turned to furthering resilience and pre-disaster planning in local communities. Considering that the scope of recovery is being integrated more and more as part of a greater effort in developing resilience, the SCDRP wanted to broaden its scope to reflect the growing membership. By making this change, the SCDRP hopes to demonstrate that it seeks to be inclusive to those working in long-term resilience issues such as climate adaptation, natural resource management, and long-term planning.

• **SCDRP Requesting Letters of Support**

As the SCDRP seeks to solidify its identity and find ways to support its efforts over the long term, the Board reached out to attendees to request letters of support for the partnership. These should be sent before the end of March to the SCDRP Director at scdrp@secoora.org, who will forward these to the Board. The letters ideally are on your letterhead and describe your reason for supporting the group, your involvement or history with the SCDRP, your interests, or whatever aspects you believe would be valuable to share that demonstrate your support of the group.

• **SCDRP Strategic Planning Committee**

As the SCDRP seeks to become a more formalized group, part of the activities at the meeting were to gain some insight on partners’ understanding of the organization’s objectives and key strategies. To ensure that the range of views and interests are included in the SCDRP strategic plan, such as developing a membership structure and creating basic by-laws of the group. The plan will detail its mission, vision and goals, and basically attempt to structure the group as an official organization using the strong foundation members and supporters. The SCDRP seeks volunteers who would be willing to provide feedback on the draft or share best practices from their experiences. Ideally, the SCDRP seeks to enlist a member from the CCoP in this effort to help us draft a grounding document that would open the door for working closely or even merging with this group in the future.

To join the SCDRP listserv, email scdrp@secoora.org to request to be added.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Sponsors

A special thank you for the great support from our members. Membership registration helps with the cost of meeting expenses and without the great response of those willing to put forth effort and energy. We would like to thank the **National Academies of Sciences, Gulf Research Program** for their sponsorship and support of this meeting.

Additionally, both the **Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA)** and **NOAA Office for Coastal Management** provided the core funding for this meeting and the necessary support to maintain this organization as we work towards building strong partnerships and resilient communities in the Southeast and Caribbean.



Our People

SCDRP2020 Meeting Planning Committee

There is no way to top the tremendous network of people that make up a group like the SCDRP. To produce a relevant and productive meeting takes brainstorming ideas, coordinating calls, speakers, sessions, and deciding on timelines and meeting flow. We would like to acknowledge the collection of invaluable SCDRP members who

volunteered to serve on the Meeting Planning Committee and made it relevant and successful by sharing their expertise. They provided ideas and formats for great sessions, tapping into their networks and associations to encourage their chosen speakers to attend. On behalf of the SCDRP, a special thank you for the hard work and heavy lifting to make this happen!

Lindy Betzhold, NOAA
Dr. Barbara Bischof, SCDRP
Brandy Bones, ICF
Rick DeVoe, SC Sea Grant
Ginger Garte, Loyd's Register
Kim Garvey, US Army
Susan Gibson, US Army

Debra Hernandez, SECOORA
Jennifer Kline, GA Dept. of Natural Resources
Sean Lahav, Northeast Florida Regional Council
Jason Liechty, Broward County, FL
Margo Moering, Northeast Florida Regional Council
David Perry, SC Emergency Management Division
Julie Shiyou-Woodard, Smart Home America

SCDRP Steering Committee

The SCDRP Advisory Board is crucial in developing the SCDRP initiative. These individuals are key to finding ways to integrate the overarching goal of the partnership by engaging all sectors, from federal representatives to small business owners, non-profits, academic scholars and representatives from state governance offices and municipalities. The SCDRP Board members are constantly working on leveraging support to allow the SCDRP to continue. Thank you for your service:

Lindy Betzhold, NOAA
Mary Conley, The Nature Conservancy
Rick DeVoe, SC Sea Grant
James Green, SAI Global
Robert Haywood, FEMA

Debra Hernandez, SECOORA
Jennifer Kline, GA Department of Natural Resources
Dr. Amanda Martin, NC Emergency Management
Dr. Gavin Smith, NC State University
Dr. Adam Stein, NOAA

Meeting Support Staff

Special thanks to Abbey Wakely, Communications Director for SECOORA for her crucial role in assisting with event planning logistics and on-site support throughout the meeting.

Volunteers

Thanks to Jacksonville University student-volunteers, Warner Buchman, Laurel Wainwright, and especially volunteer coordinator Jennifer John, for their assistance throughout the meeting. These volunteers staffed the registration table, tracked attendance and helped SCDRP meeting planners.

APPENDIX

Meeting Hand-outs Presentations

All materials in the Appendix are also available on <https://www.scdrp.secoora.org/resources>