

# North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study: Policy Challenges and Institutional Barriers Overview

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# Agenda

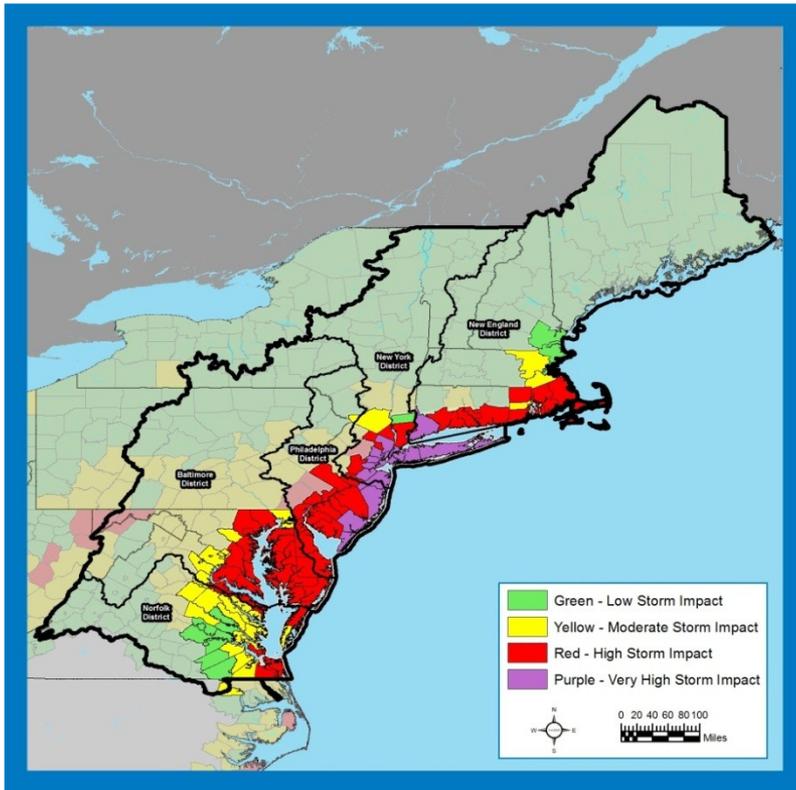
- General NACCS overview
- **Part 1:** Policy and institutional challenges as identified by interviews/literature review
- **Part 2:** Workshop on policy challenges for nature-based infrastructure



# NACCS Background

“That using up to \$20,000,000\* of the funds provided herein, the Secretary shall conduct a **comprehensive study** to address the flood risks of **vulnerable coastal populations** in areas that were affected by Hurricane Sandy within the boundaries of the North Atlantic Division of the Corps...” (\*\$19M after sequestration)

- Complete by Jan 2015



## Goals

- Provide a risk reduction framework, consistent with USACE-NOAA Rebuilding Principles
- Support resilient coastal communities and robust, sustainable coastal landscape systems, considering future sea level rise and climate change scenarios, to reduce risk to vulnerable population, property, ecosystems, and infrastructure



# North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study

- Study due to Congress by January 2015
- Ensure study is consistent with interagency efforts
- ***Identify institutional barriers*** and develop strategies to address them



# Part 1: Objective

Identify “Policy Challenges” that, in the broadest sense, hinder the ability to provide comprehensive protection to coastal areas. “Policy Challenges” include:

- **Policies** (laws, regulations, agency guidance and programs) at federal, state, or local levels that:
  - Contribute to vulnerability of coastal populations, and/or to vulnerability of coastal infrastructure
  - Work at cross purposes with policies and measures that reduce risk and/or increase resiliency
  - Increase flood risk in the coastal zone (tidally influenced)
  - Conflict with the goals of coastal management
  - Expose federal investments or increase financial exposure of Federal taxpayers
- **Institutional barriers** posed by agency silos, missions, incompatible policies, etc. that:
  - Inhibit necessary coordination and collaboration among agencies/levels of government, and/or that otherwise impede the attainment of NACCS goals



▪ **Public/political barriers** that impede a community's or politician's willingness to support hard decisions, innovative solutions or

# Part 1: Key Questions & Approach

- **Key Questions**

- What are the most significant policy challenges that complicate or impede the attainment of NACCS goals? (**Challenges**)
- What policies are facilitating the attainment of NACCS goals? (**Successes**)
- What are priorities for action for tackling policy challenges? (**Opportunities**)

- **Approach**

- Interviews (federal, state, local government representatives, academe, stakeholder groups)
- Literature reviews



# Part 1: Bottom Line Up Front

- Policy landscape is complex and vast
- This landscape is becoming more supportive of NACCS risk management and resilience goals
- Numerous ideas and recommendations for creating a policy environment more supportive of NACCS goals have emerged during the NACCS study
- Some of the more significant findings are presented in today's webinar



# Findings: Challenges, Successes, Opportunities

- Themes
  - Risk/resilience standards
  - Risk communication and outreach
  - Risk management
  - Science, engineering, and technology
  - Leadership and institutional coordination
  - Economic stressors and resources



# Risk/Resilience Standards

## ▪ **Challenges**

- Lack of a uniform standard for defining “acceptable risk” for coastal communities and infrastructure.
- Some federal policies’ disaster mitigation requirements prevent risk management improvements

## ▪ **Successes**

- Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy Task Force (HSRSTF) recommended a minimum flood risk reduction rebuilding standard for major federal investments of (ABFE+1)

## ▪ **Opportunities**

- Develop standards for acceptable risk
- Assemble team of federal leaders, governors, and regional/ local champions for resilience to develop a national strategy for risk reduction and resilience, and to harmonize and untangle federal risk management



# Risk Communication and Outreach

- **Challenges**

- Effective communication of risk is difficult and sometimes key messages about risk are ignored, misunderstood, or overshadowed by fear of economic consequences associated with risk management options.

- **Successes**

- Sea Grant program, EPA National Estuary Program, local “listening sessions”

- **Opportunities**

- Improved risk communication tools



# Risk Management

## Challenges

- Complexity of risk management programs and policies provided by myriad agencies, and their sometimes inconsistent and/or conflicting execution at the local level has frustrated the recovery process and sometimes resulted in lost opportunities
- Lack of local level resilience planning capacity and capability
- Regulatory process sometimes constrains risk management solutions
- Rising insurance rates and flood risk maps

## Successes

- FEMA Community Rating System incentivizes floodplain management BMPs

## Opportunities

- Create a safety net for low income flood insurance policy holders
- Explore public – private partnership opportunities for regional sediment management
- Explore developing general permit conditions that support broad range of risk management solutions in the general permit process



# Science, Engineering, and Technology

## ▪ **Challenges**

- USACE dredge material disposal policy “least cost” requirement (Federal Standard) misses opportunities for beach nourishment
- Little performance and engineering information regarding “nature based” or “green infrastructure” coastal management solutions comparable to that available for hardened structures

## ▪ **Successes**

- NOAA/USACE map services; USACE/NOAA/FEMA SAGE initiative

## ▪ **Opportunities**

- Re-evaluate the Federal Standard for possibility of broadening evaluation factors beyond economic least cost to include ecosystem service benefits/costs, public safety, and other factors addressed in the new Principles and Requirements
- Develop design guidance for coastal risk reduction nature-based/green infrastructure solutions; information on O&M requirements



# Leadership and Institutional Coordination

## ▪ **Challenges**

- Lack of/limited coordination across Congressional committees
- Lack or limited coordination among/within agencies and levels of government

## ▪ **Successes**

- Move for new WRDA; formation of the MitFLG; FIFMTF

## ▪ **Opportunities**

- Explore use of existing coordinating/integrating mechanisms like River Basin Commissions for coastal decision making
- Explore developing special authorization (with a sunset provision) for the Sandy area to harmonize agency policies and address agency silo challenges that conflict with overarching Sandy recovery goals.
- Perhaps, in combination with special authorization opportunity above, explore developing interagency pilot project(s) to develop innovative risk management and resiliency solutions



# Economic Stressors and Resources

- **Challenges**

- Authorities focused on least cost or BCR limiting ability to consider other benefits; often not conducive to regional/watershed solutions
- Diverse cost sharing rules and policies complicate innovative financing and partnerships
- Investments to prepare for and mitigate future disasters provides much higher return than investments in disaster recovery

- **Successes**

- Authorization of funds through Disaster Relief Appropriations; growing support for public-private partnerships; new Principles and Requirements

- **Opportunities**

- Create new tax and market-based incentive programs for risk management and resilience
- New tools for quantifying benefits identified in the P&R



# Part 1: Summary, Conclusions

- A policy and institutional landscape more supportive of NACCS goals is emerging
- Some key opportunities for creating a policy environment more supportive of NACCS goals:
  - Standards to define acceptable levels of risks
  - Integrated national/regional strategies for flood risk and coastal management
  - Strong coordinated leadership/governance to tackle institutional barriers and promote interagency collaboration
  - Improved tools for communicating risk
  - Disaster mitigation funding (vs. disaster recovery)



# Part 1: Questions?

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