

# National survey reveals coastal concerns over climate change

March 12 2014, by Pat Kight

---

The American public may be divided over whether climate is changing, but coastal managers and elected officials in nine states say they see the change happening – and believe their communities will need to adapt.

That's one finding from a NOAA Sea Grant research project, led by Oregon Sea Grant at Oregon State University. The project involved multiple other Sea Grant programs, which surveyed coastal leaders in selected parts of the nation's Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf and Great Lakes coasts, as well as Hawaii.

Three-quarters of coastal professionals surveyed – and 70 percent of all participants – said they believe that the climate in their area is changing.

While national polls dating back more than a decade, including several by Gallup, have revealed some public skepticism and polarization about climate change, the Sea Grant findings are in line with a number of recent surveys – including several by the Yale Project on Climate Change and Communication – suggesting a growing majority of Americans believes the earth's climate is changing. However, many express uncertainty that anything can be done about it.

The Sea Grant [survey](#) was developed to understand what coastal and resource professionals and elected officials think about climate change, where their communities stand in planning for climate adaptation and what kinds of information they need, said project leader Joe Cone, assistant director of Oregon Sea Grant.

Sea Grant programs in Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois-Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington – states that represent most of NOAA's coastal regions – took part, administering the survey between January 2012 and November 2013.

Among 30 questions, survey participants were asked how informed they felt about climate change in their area and whether they thought that the climate in their area is changing. Participants identified where their agencies and communities stood in planning to adapt to climate change, and hurdles they have encountered and overcome. They also identified climate-related topics important to their work and how much information they had about those topics.

Overall, three-quarters of the 355 coastal/resource professionals who responded felt that the climate in their area is changing. Most (68 percent) felt that they were moderately- to very well-informed about the local effects of climate change. A common hurdle respondents encountered was a lack of agreement over the importance of those effects. Shoreline change and flooding concerns were among the topics respondents considered important to their own work.

A newly published report by Oregon Sea Grant presents the combined results for all survey respondents, as well as the responses from each participating state.

Cone said this national survey, funded in part by Sea Grant's national focus team on hazard resilient coastal communities, represents an initial attempt to understand the opinions and information needs of coastal/resource professionals regarding [climate change](#) adaptation and planning. Participating Sea Grant programs are already using the survey results to assist communities develop local adaptation strategies. In addition, Cone said he hoped that this survey may stimulate additional survey research by Sea Grant, NOAA, and other coastal interests on this

vital topic.

**More information:** The survey report is available as a free download from Oregon Sea Grant at: [seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sgpub... climate-survey-report](https://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sgpub...climate-survey-report)

Provided by Oregon State University

Citation: National survey reveals coastal concerns over climate change (2014, March 12)  
retrieved 7 May 2024 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2014-03-national-survey-reveals-coastal-climate.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.