

LET'S WORK TOGETHER; NEW MODELS FOR ACHIEVING ACTIONABLE SCIENCE

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Problems that need to be solved do not fall into discrete categories of science, nor are they independent of engagement, extension or outreach. They are complex in nature, usually requiring an interdisciplinary team approach. With an abundance of specific needs for the South Carolina coast, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium is exploring multiple innovative models of research in addition to standard requests for funding.

A mini-proposal "Coastal Research and Extension Study Group" competition for work in 2014-2015 provided specific coastal management issues in search of a solution in addition to a requirement that each proposal be led by a "Study Group" that consisted of, at a minimum, an academic institution investigator, a graduate student and a Sea Grant extension specialist. Project questions were focused on areas identified by on-the-ground extension specialists within the topical areas of climate, fisheries, sustainable communities and coastal processes and hazards.

Five one-year projects were funded within four academic research institutions. Sea Grant extension specialists have been engaged from the proposal stage to the final report so that they can accurately interpret and extend the knowledge gained throughout the process directly for decision-makers. The projects funded were; Assessing the Status of the Blue Crab Fishery, Blueways-Greenways; Developing Examples as Models for Other Communities, Understanding Perceptions of Climate Change in South Carolina's Coastal Communities; An Approach using Cultural Cognition and Deliberative Polling, Challenges to Fishery-Related Working Waterfronts, and Assessing The Effectiveness of Enhanced Rip Current Awareness Signage. The results of the projects and the utility of results to the coastal management community will be discussed. At the conclusion of the work, the process and results were evaluated from the perspective of the lead investigators, graduate students, extension specialists and Sea Grant administrators. Questions included relevance to Sea Grant and to University science priorities and outreach goals, quality of teamwork, relevance to personal objectives, areas for improvement, assessment of expectations for the group work, completion of project objectives and willingness to participate in this style project in the future. A very brief overview of each project will be presented, and although this is a small number of pilot projects, responses to these survey questions will be summarized.