

COASTAL COMMUNICATORS

A newsletter for the nation's coastal management and research reserve programs.

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IF IT SOUNDS
LIKE WRITING,
I REWRITE IT.

– Elmore Leonard



September 2020, Issue 23

COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

PREPPING FOR A TELEVISION INTERVIEW

We're continuing our series of media-related insights, having recently covered tips for [answering a reporter's inquiry](#). Now what happens when the phone rings, and the reporter on the other end wants to interview a spokesperson for your agency? How do you prepare?

Ask the Reporter Questions

Most often, the interview is set up with a phone call. Always ask the reporter to describe the story, and find out what type of questions you can expect, the deadline, when and where the reporter would like to meet (likely virtually, these days), how long the interview is expected to take, and the anticipated air date.

If you don't have what the reporter is looking for, let him or her know (but help find the right person, if you can).

Don't be afraid of the hard questions. If it is controversial, getting out there first will give you the best opportunity to state your case and control the messaging. But don't guess. Either you have an answer you are 100 percent confident in, or you don't.

Anticipate what questions you will get, and practice.

Think about What You Wear

Dress appropriately for your job and the location. In other words, don't wear a suit on the beach, or a t-shirt on a video interview in an office setting. Dangly earrings and wild glasses generally don't play well on TV. Solid colors work best. A little pressed powder on your face, to cut down on the shine, is helpful. If you are standing, turn slightly sideways, as opposed to facing the camera straight on, as this physical presentation is generally more flattering.

If you are going to shoot in your office—home or otherwise—clean up, or find another office that looks more presentable. You want to come off as cool, collected, and on top of things.

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Think about What You Say and How You Say It

First and foremost, remember that everything is on the record, even that background information you provide on the phone or before the cameras roll. It's like a secret—don't tell anyone unless you are prepared for everyone to know.

You want to speak in concise language. Pause between your sentences to give the editor space to clip as needed. Answer the question as concisely as you can. Talk as if you are talking to a friend, which means easy, high-level concepts and no jargon or acronyms. If you mess up (and we all do), say so on camera as opposed to trying to fix it by adding a run-on thought or sentence. Admitting you messed up almost forces the reporter to tape over the blooper. There's nothing wrong with having to answer the same question two or three times.

Don't forget to smile, and try to make the exchange conversational. Bring some water to drink. If you are doing the interview over the phone, stand up. The simple act of standing will give you more confidence and give your voice more presence.

This Might Even Be Fun

The vast majority of reporters want you to do well, and will offer tips to ensure this happens. Take them up on it, and try to have fun with it. Talking to the media is only as stressful as you let it be. Once you are being interviewed, you are the expert. Let your knowledge shine through and communicate the messaging you've practiced.

If you have questions about this topic or would like to suggest another one for this newsletter, drop us a line! We always love hearing from you.



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COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH

Picture This:

A Visual Profile of Coastal Management

If a picture is worth a thousand words, photos of our beautiful coasts can tell at least a thousand stories. That's why, in this issue, we are profiling some of the winning photos from our 2020 *Coastal Management in Action* photo contest.

Not only are the images evocative and the photographers talented, but the stories behind them, and the reasons the winners were inspired, communicate so much about coastal management and why we all do what we do. As communicators, we know that in storytelling it's best to show, not tell—and we believe these photos do just that.



Title: Monkey's Knuckle; **Category:** Marine Debris
Photographer: Jace Tunnell, Mission-Aransas Reserve, Director

About photo: *There are all types of marine debris that we find on the beach in Texas that wash up from all over the world. Some of the debris is interesting, colorful, and artistic. We save debris like this monkey's fist, and we hold a "trash to treasures" sale every year that raises money for our sea turtle rehab facility.*



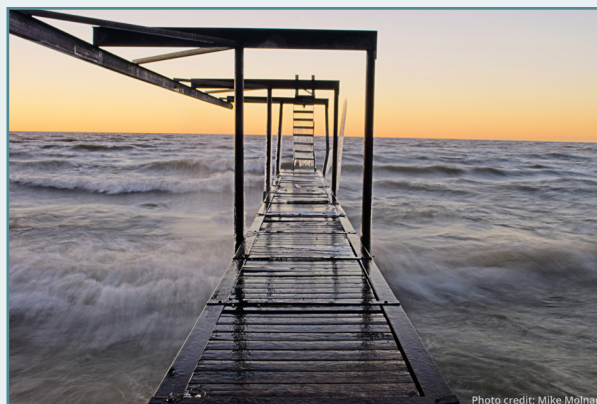
Title: Storm Coming In; **Category:** Coastal Hazards
Photographer: Jace Tunnell, Mission-Aransas Reserve, Director

About photo: *One of my favorite times of year is in the spring, when we have late storms blow down from the north. Many times, there is a straight line of ominous clouds,*

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COMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)

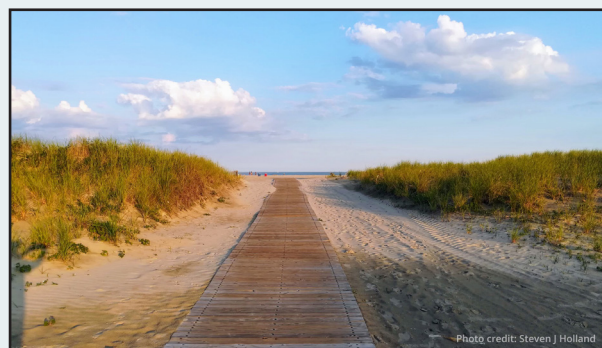
followed by a strong, cool wind blowing off the bay. While these systems can be dangerous due to wind, many times they bring much needed rain to a drought-prone area like South Texas.



Title: Late Spring on Lake Ontario during the High Water Event; **Category:** Coastal Hazards

Photographer: Mike Molnar, Coastal States Organization, Deputy Director

About photo: *The photo was taken in March a few years ago along the shores of Lake Ontario, near Rochester, New York. The photo captures a few noteworthy items—the lack of lake ice this time of year, the power of the waves, and the high water level. Since 2013, the Great Lakes water levels have risen about six feet, from near all-time lows to above all-time highs. To put it into perspective, that is more than the forecast for sea level rise by the end of the century. The high water levels are compounded by the lack of shelf ice, which historically forms and protects the shoreline from winter storms. Given these multiple factors, the Great Lakes shorelines are eroding at higher rates and present many challenges for coastal communities. The sliver of ice on the pier structure gives a slight reminder of the shelf ice that used to form.*



Title: Through the Dunes and Into the Sea!

Category: Public Access

Photographer: Steve Holland, Ohio Coastal Management Program, Coastal Programs Administrator

About photo: *This photo was taken on the beach in Wildwood Crest, New Jersey. As a child, our family took annual summer vacations here, so it's always been a special place to me. We recently decided to bring our children to this same place, and the walk through the dunes seemed like a gateway of sorts, not only to this beautiful beach, but also to the new memories we'll always have from the Wildwoods.*

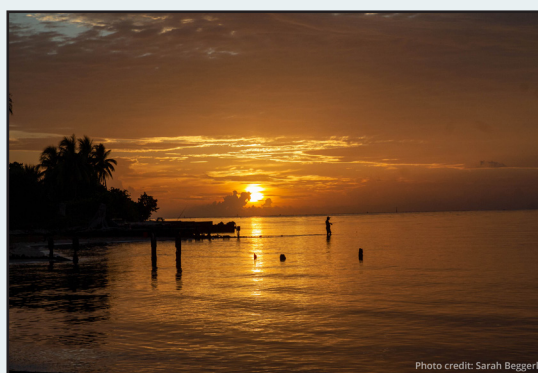


Title: Buoy Washed Up in High Tide with Sargassum;

Category: Marine Debris
Photographer: Sarah Beggerly, Riverside Technologies Inc., in support

of NOAA Fisheries, Fisheries Biologist

About photo: *I volunteer with the Sea Turtle Nesting Survey here in the Miami area, and it's amazing how much trash washes onto our shore with each tide. This is just one of several buoys found within just a few days of one another.*



Title: Sunrise Fishing along Channel, Florida;

Category: Recreation

Photographer: Sarah Beggerly, Riverside Technologies Inc., in support of NOAA Fisheries, Fisheries Biologist

About photo: *This photo features a beautiful spring sunrise with many people taking advantage and getting some fishing in before it gets hot.*

FROM US TO YOU

OUTREACH TOOL SPOTLIGHT – SEA LEVEL RISE VIEWER

You know it, you use it, you love it (we hope!)—and now it's even better. The Sea Level Rise Viewer was recently updated to include higher-resolution images and new high-tide flooding data, among other things. Use this tool, and all its new and improved features, to show your audience photo simulations of sea level rise, marsh migration scenarios, vulnerable locations in their communities, and more. Access it here: coast.noaa.gov/slr/#.

ECONOMICS EXPLORER

Whether writing an article, a speech, or any other type of outreach material, up-to-date economic

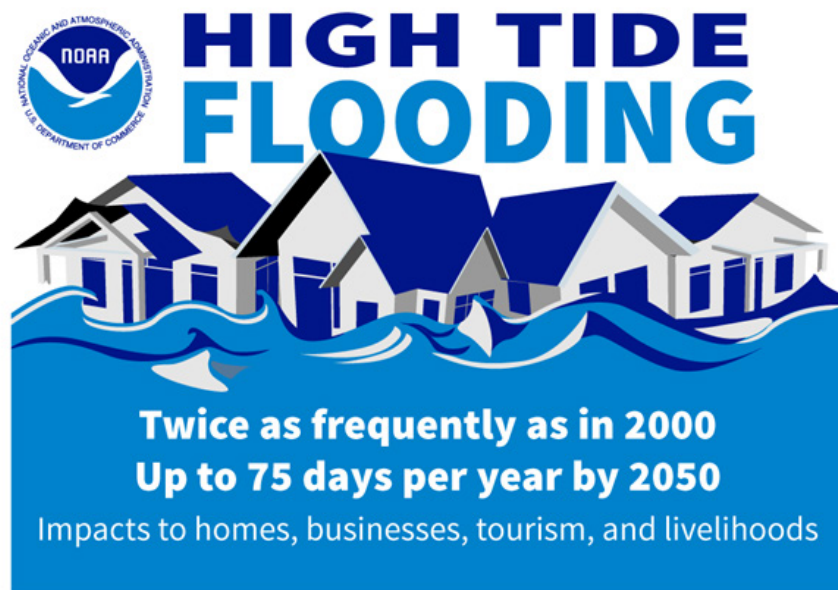
numbers make your message that much stronger. Instead of getting lost in an internet rabbit hole of fact-finding, use this search tool to find and compare all Great Lakes and ocean economy data at the state and county level. Downloadable graphics make your findings that much more communicator-friendly. Find the ENOW Explorer here: coast.noaa.gov/enowexplorer/#/.

UPCOMING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and tag along with these campaigns:

- September 19 to 26: Use #EstuariesWeek for National Estuaries Week updates.

FAST FACTS – HIGH TIDE FLOODING



This is one of the many graphics and facts available for your use in presentations and handouts. Grab this one at coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/recurrent-tidal-flooding.html. If you have an idea for a new group of fast facts or illustrations, please let us know.

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