

MYCOAST: SOUTH CAROLINA - ENHANCING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF COASTAL HAZARDS THROUGH CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

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MyCoast; South Carolina is a web and mobile-device enabled application that allows users to upload images and information related to coastal events. Produced by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, this application was designed to engage the public, visualize the impact of coastal hazards, and enhance awareness of coastal hazard vulnerability among decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public. MyCoast; South Carolina currently houses three reporting tools; King Tides, Storm Witness, and Abandoned Boats. New users may register at <http://www.MyCoast.org/SC> via desktop, smartphone, or tablet. Once logged in, users can view photos from other users, see the distribution of reports on the map, and submit a report using one of the three available tools. The South Carolina King Tides Initiative encourages users to document the effects that extreme tide events have on beaches, private property, and public infrastructure. “King Tides” is a nonscientific term used to describe the highest seasonal tides that occur each year. The King Tides tool geolocates the photographer's position and appends data including weather conditions, proximity to the nearest tidal gauge, and tide stage at the time of the photograph. Individual reports and photographs are displayed via an interactive map interface on the MyCoast website. King Tide events can be identified by consulting the DHEC Tide Chart; <http://www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Water/2015TideTables/>. Storm Witness focuses on the collection and communication of storm-related impacts to coastal structures and beach erosion. In addition to submitting photos, participants of Storm Witness are prompted to characterize post-storm beach conditions and impacts to specific types of structures. The information collected through Storm Witness will enable DHEC to more efficiently coordinate with state and local governmental entities and prioritize storm response activities. The newest tool added to the MyCoast platform is the Abandoned Boats reporting tool, which was designed to facilitate stakeholder reporting of derelict and abandoned vessels.