

## Strategic Communications & Outreach in Planning for Sea Level Rise

**Jill Gambill**

Georgia Sea Grant &  
University of Georgia  
Marine Extension

**Jason Evans**

Stetson University

## PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:

Georgia Sea Grant  
City of Tybee Island  
City of St. Marys  
Stetson University  
Department of Natural Resources  
St. Marys Earthkeepers  
Chatham County Metropolitan  
Planning Commission  
North Carolina Sea Grant

University of Georgia  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government  
Lamar Dodd School of Art  
College of Environment and Design  
UGA Marine Extension  
Public Service and Outreach

*(Funded by NOAA National Sea Grant  
program)*



# BUILDING RESILIENCE

Planning for sea level  
rise and climate  
adaptation planning  
throughout the  
Southeast

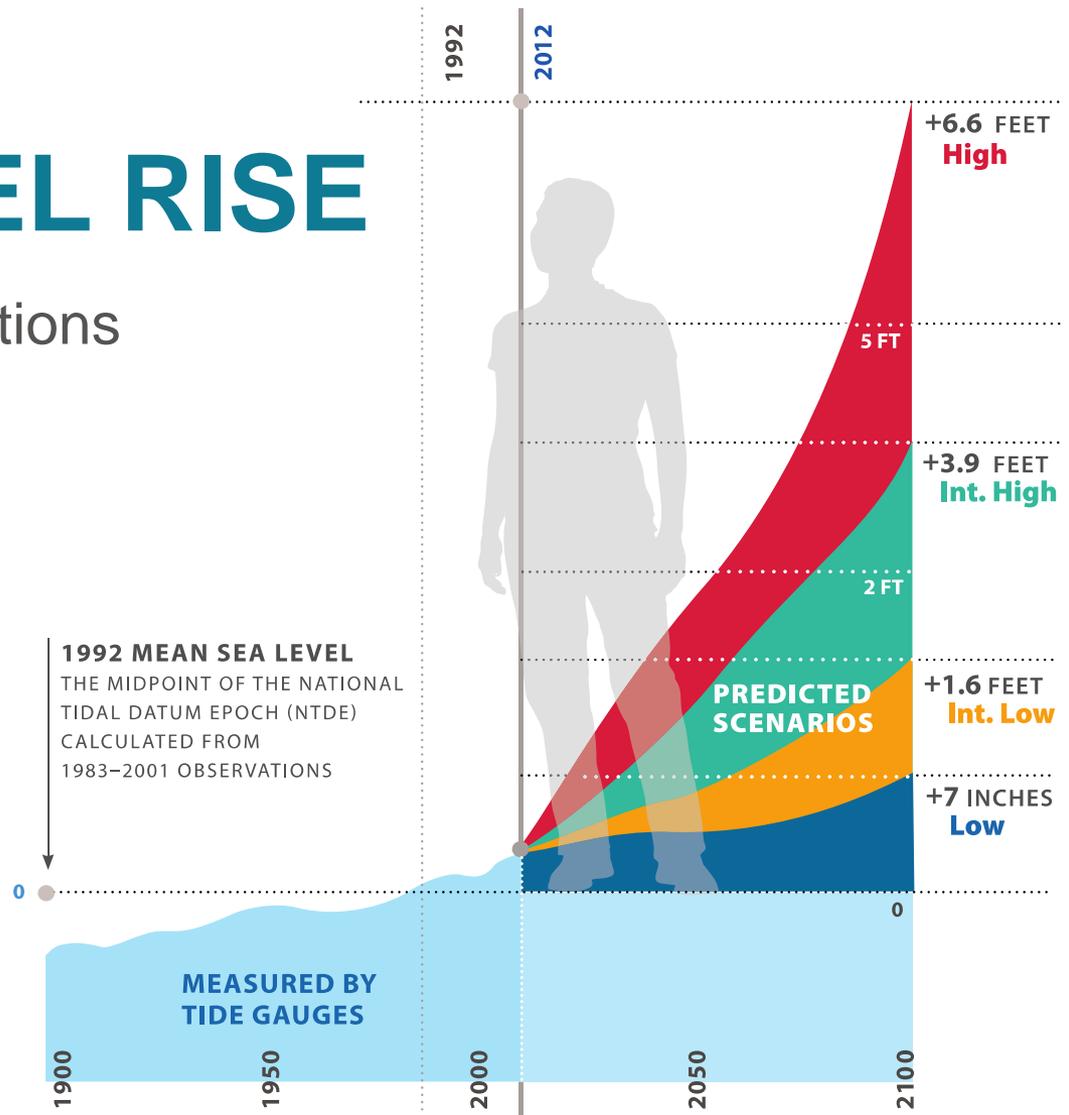






# GLOBAL SEA LEVEL RISE

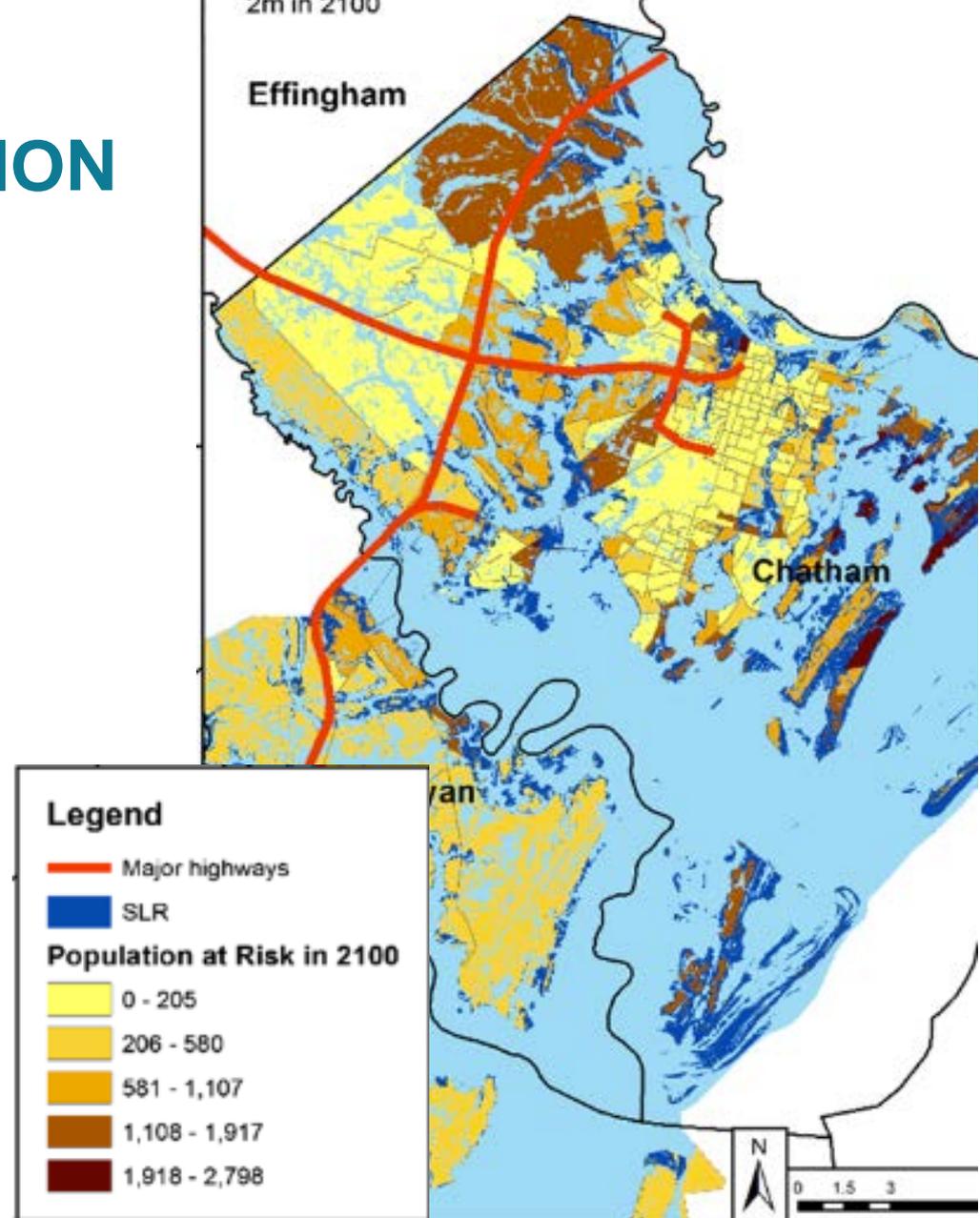
## 2012 NOAA Predictions



# COASTAL POPULATION GROWTH

Between 62,000 to 159,000 people living in coastal Georgia will be at risk from between 3.3-6.6 feet of sea level rise by 2100.

- Matt Hauer et al.  
University of Georgia,  
*Population and Environment*,  
Feb. 2015



# FALL 2015 TRIPLE PUNCH

- Supermoon Lunar Eclipse – Sept. 27-29
- Hurricane Joaquin and Rain – Oct. 2-6
- King Tide – Oct. 27 and 28

*Flooding on Tybee Island, GA, from a king tide in Oct. 2015.*



# SEA GRANT PROCESS

- Community-driven process
- Identify where is vulnerable
- Identify what is most critical and which potential actions to take

*Former Tybee Island City Councilman  
Paul Wolff with project team members  
Rob McDowell and Jason Evans.*



# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS



Communications is a two-way street.



## 1. PROJECT DESIGN

Integrated multidisciplinary approach to help facilitate **inclusive** planning process.

## 1. HOW YOU COMMUNICATE BACK

Bottom-up approach in communicating or educating.

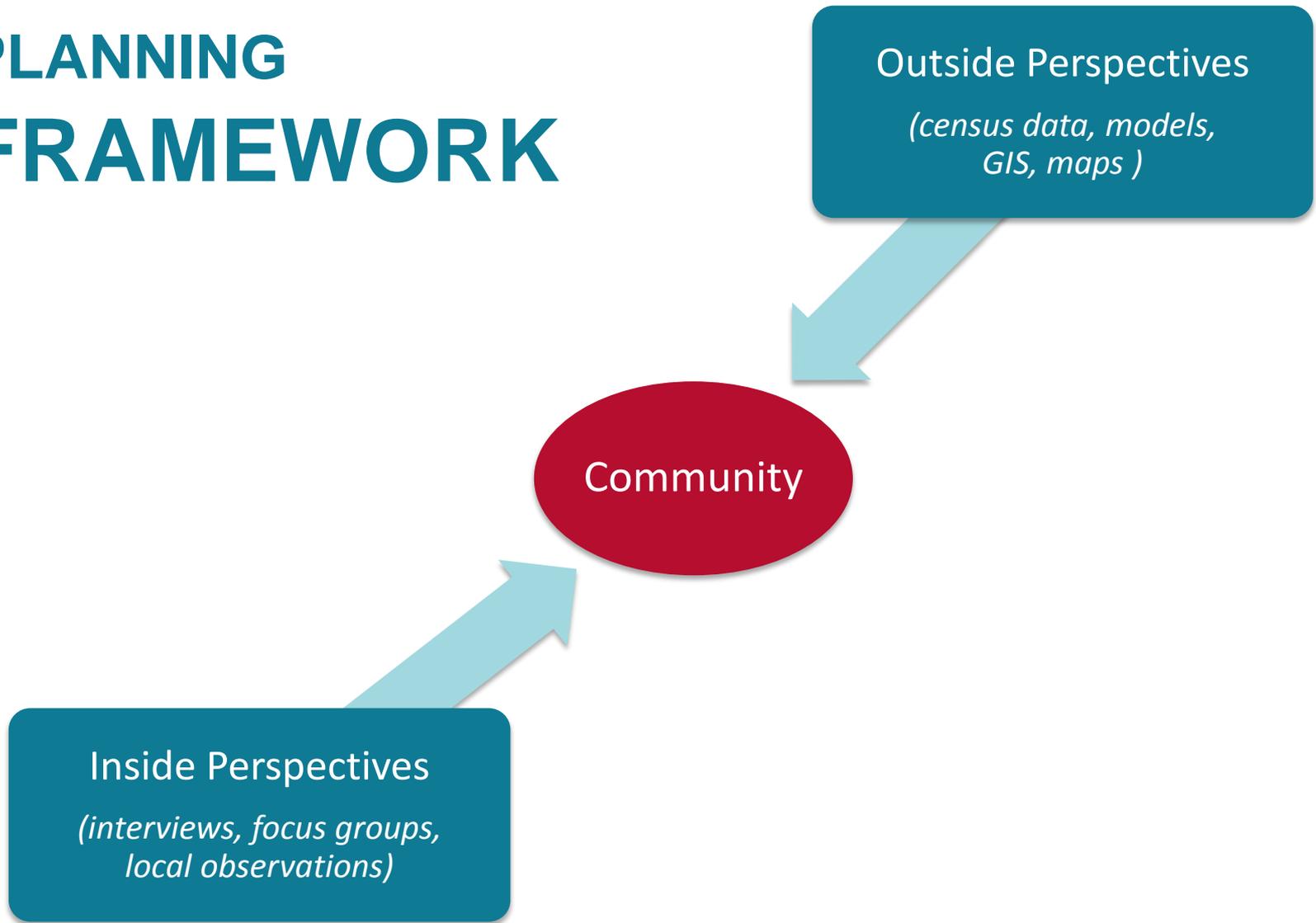
*Flooding on Tybee Island, GA,  
from a king tide in Nov. 2012.*



# BUILDING BLOCKS OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION



# PLANNING FRAMEWORK



# WHO IS PRIORITIZING? WHAT IS THE PRIORITY?

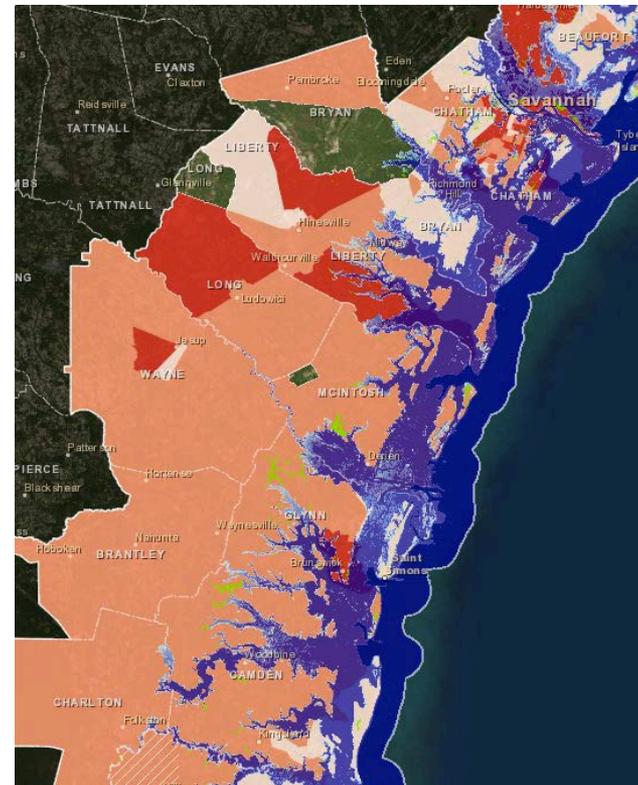
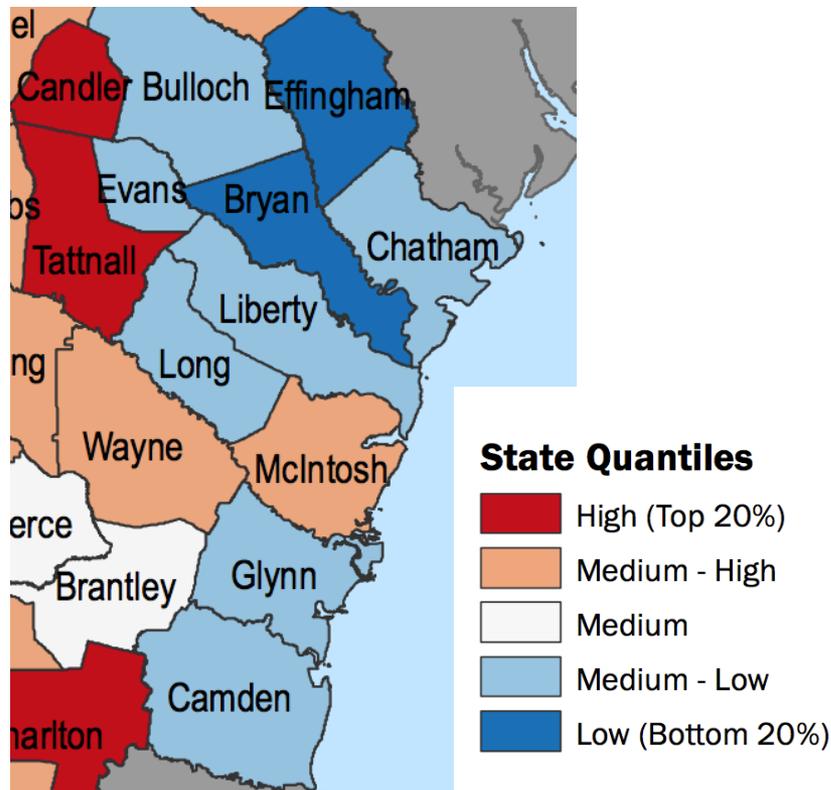


*Former Planning Director Roger Weaver shows the project team examples of shoreline erosion in St. Marys, GA.*

# SOCIALLY VULNERABLE OR MULTIPLY BURDENED?

*Social Vulnerability Index (SoVI)*

*Socio economic vulnerability layered with 3 feet of sea level rise in Digital Coast's Sea Level Rise Viewer*



# Creative Engagement

Vulnerability, Consequences, and Adaptation Planning Scenarios (VCAPS)

*Jessica Whitehead creates a diagram of facilitated conversation in St. Marys, GA.*



# Creative Engagement

Wetland Watch's  
**Sea Level Rise**  
mobile app

*Mark Risse uses a mobile app to track  
flooding from a king tide on Tybee Island, GA.*



# Creative Engagement

## Jekyll Island Green Screen

*Over 800 people viewed the film “Chasing Ice” at the Jekyll Island Green Screen.*



# Creative Engagement

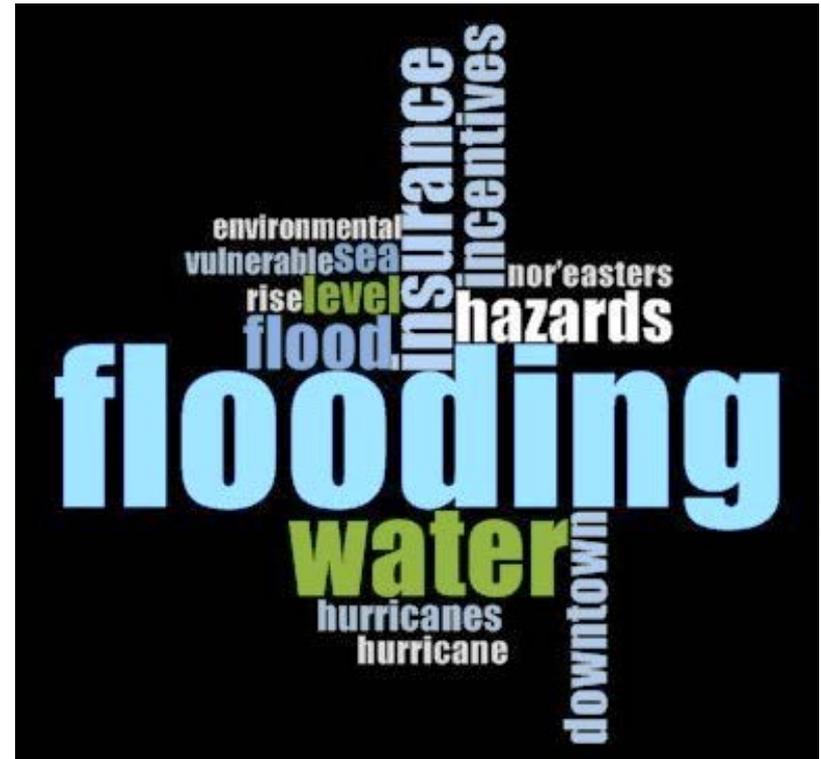
The **Community Rating System** recognizes communities who take steps to reduce their flood risk.

*Jason Evans and Georgia Sea Grant Legal Fellow J.P. Hackney measure elevation in St. Marys, GA.*



# STRATEGIC COMM 101

- Keep it **local**
- Keep it **relevant**



*Top 15 words most mentioned in interviews in St. Marys, GA. (Nvivo software analysis)*

# STRATEGIC COMM 101

- Keep it **local**
- Keep it **relevant**
- Find your **points of entry**

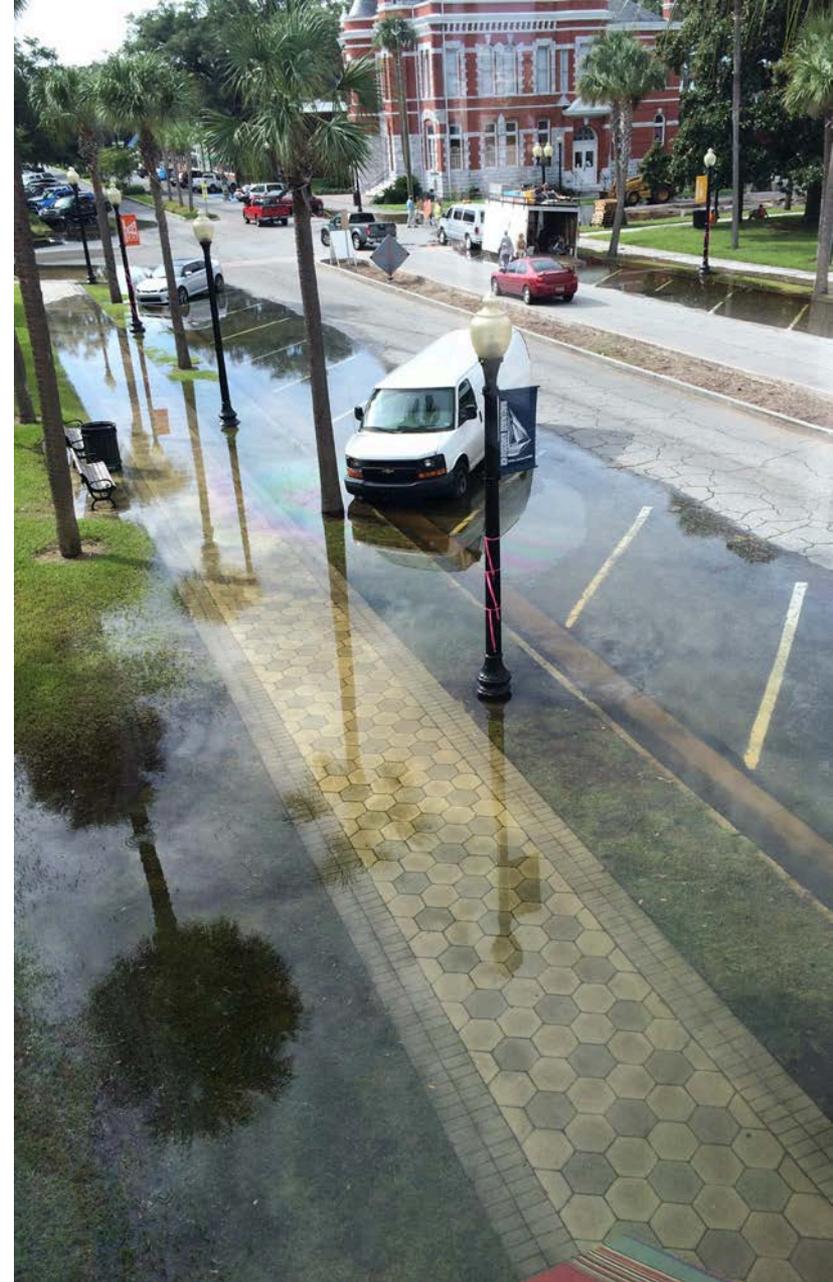
*Site visit to Tybee Island, GA, for members of the Georgia House Natural Resources Committee.*



# STRATEGIC COMM 101

- Dynamic photos
- Summary of important data
- On-the-ground observations in real-time

*Flooding in Brunswick, GA, during the  
supermoon lunar eclipse on Sept. 29, 2015  
Photo credit: Kelly Patton*



# MEET COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY ARE

- Listen
- Know your **audience**
- Identify **planning parameters**:  
How far into the future can you plan? What is on the table and what is not?



*Town Hall Meeting in St. Marys, GA*

# OTHER PLATFORMS



U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit

Get Started **Taking Action** Tools

Taking Action > Show Don't Tell: Visualizing Sea Level Rise to Set Planning Priorities >

**Show Don't Tell: Visualizing Sea Level Rise to Set Planning Priorities**

City officials in Tybee Island, Georgia, recognized sea level rise as a growing problem for their community. Visualizations from a sea level rise viewer helped them raise awareness of the city's vulnerabilities and set priorities for adaption efforts.

- Case study in **U.S. Climate and Resilience Toolkit**
- Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)'s **Southeast Climate Road Trip** - praised efforts on Senate Floor
- Union of Concerned Scientists report (Nov. 2014): "Organizations in Georgia... can **provide leadership and vision** for other such efforts nationwide."

# LOCAL IMPACTS

- Outreach to over **4,000 people**
- Data to be used in **beach renourishment** with U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
- Trying to get GA DoT to incorporate sea level rise into modification of **Highway 80**
- City unlikely to pursue building **seawall**
- Installed **tide gates** to prevent backflow



# LOCAL IMPACTS

- Building a **Living Shoreline** to battle erosion
- Studying voluntary **buyout program** for repetitive loss properties
- Residents qualified for \$1 million **flood insurance discounts** under FEMA's Community Rating System



# AWARDS



- 2014 Sea Grant National Superior Outreach Programming Award
- 2014 Superior Outreach Programming Award for the South Atlantic Sea Grant region
- 2013 Four for the Future Award by Georgia Trend Magazine
- 2013 University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach Faculty Fellowship Award



# Questions?

VISIT US ON THE WEB:  
<http://georgiaseagrant.uga.edu>