

RESEARCH

Sea-level Rise Summit Sets the Stage for Adaptation

FAU recently hosted the Third Sea-level Rise Summit with more than 250 participants in attendance. The conference featured experts from the public and private sectors, as well as scientists and researchers.



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BY GISELE GALOUSTIAN | 5/6/2016

FAU's Center for Environmental Studies recently pulled out all the stops at the Third Sea-level Rise Summit, "Connected Futures from Alaska to Florida," at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale. More than 250 participants attended the conference, which featured experts and leaders from the public and private sectors, as well as scientists and researchers from academia and government. The two-day event included facilitated panel sessions and interactive visioning activities covering topics such as the economic implications of sea-level rise, impacts on infrastructure, health and livelihoods, and response success stories.

The summit kicked off with an exhibit and poster session followed by an overview of global glacier melt presented by Alex Gardner, Ph.D., a research scientist at NASA-Jet Propulsion Lab. The conference resumed the following day with welcoming remarks from Daniel C. Flynn, Ph.D., FAU's vice president for research, and a session titled, "Setting the Stage: What's at Stake and Why We Should Care," presented by Colin Polsky, Ph.D., director of FAU's Center for Environmental Studies and a professor of geosciences.

"While Florida and Alaska are on the opposite ends of the continent, they share mutual concerns of the imminent challenges presented by environmental changes," said Polsky. "The rapid melting of Arctic ice is threatening coastal locations globally, and impacts include increased flooding from sea-level rise in Florida to infrastructure instability from permafrost melting in Alaska. Our summit is all about adaptation and collaboration and how everyone can do their part to help."

Among the distinguished **panel of speakers and presenters** (<http://www.ces.fau.edu/arctic-florida/agenda.php>) were Daniel A. Reifsnyder, Ph.D., deputy assistant secretary for environment, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State; U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch; State Rep. Kristin Jacobs; Jim Cason, mayor of Coral Gables; Roderick King, M.D., Florida Institute for Health Innovation; and Nic Kinsman, Ph.D., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

King and Craig Stephen, Ph.D., University of Saskatchewan and Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative, led the "Health Plenary: New Illness Risks to Manage," and provided insights on a relatively new and emerging perspective on health, disease, and sea-level rise.