

## **Sarah Watson**

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### **Education**

#### **Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

May, 2017

Edward J. Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy

**Master of Public Policy:** Climate Adaptation Policy

**Master of City and Regional Planning:** Coastal Resilience Planning

**Certificate:** Human Dimensions of Environmental Change

#### **Temple University – School of Communications and Theater**

May, 2006

**Bachelor of Arts** – Journalism

### **Relevant Experience**

#### **The College of Charleston**

January 2020 – Current

Adjunct Professor

- Teaches a newly created course on communicating science to decision-makers in the Masters of Environmental and Sustainability program.
- Developing a new course for Fall 2020 on case studies in applied coastal resilience.

#### **S. C. Sea Grant Consortium and Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments**

October 2017 – Current

Coastal Climate and Resilience Specialist

- Provides hands-on technical assistance to local and regional government staff and other stakeholders about understanding coastal climate hazards and applying the science to various types of decisions in the near, mid, and long-term.
- Assists local communities with applying climate science to decision-making, primarily by translating how future conditions may affect community systems and helps decision-makers think through comprehensive planning, ordinance revisions, and planning overlay creation.
- Serves as project manager for a \$500,000 NOAA Regional Coastal Resilience Grant project to develop high resolution flood modeling for Charleston and connect findings with residents and local governments.
- Directs and develops neighborhood-level community engagement events as part of the NOAA RCRG project. Events incorporate a risk communication frame work and is done as a partnership with municipalities in order to advance multiple flood education and communication goals.
- Provides training on coastal climate risks, risk communication, community and stakeholder engagement, and related activities.
- Develops and delivers tailored outreach and education programming about climate change, sea level rise, flooding, and other coastal hazards in South Carolina.
- Facilitates connections between professional peers to enhance regional coastal resilience in South Carolina.
- Manages multiple grant-funded projects aimed at developing co-produced climate-related research.

#### **Sarah Watson Consulting**

September 2015 – Current

Risk Communication Consulting

- Develops and implements risk communication training and technical assistance.
- Consults on community engagement program development and design for municipal, regional, and state governments around the nation.

**The Baldwin Group at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** September 2015 – September 2017  
Risk Communication Consultant for the **Office for Coastal Management, Learning Services Division**

- Conceptualized and developed risk communication training and educational materials for floodplain managers and local officials, helping them improve public outreach and engagement.
- Developed coastal resilience public education materials that apply risk communication best practices and meet FEMA Community Rating System outreach guidelines.
- Provided coastal hazards-related risk communication consultation, education, and training to local and state government officials, outreach professionals, engineers, and other flood-preparedness practitioners.
- Developed and delivered risk communication training and resources to emergency and floodplain managers, state and local government officials, and others involved in outreach.
- Assisted with development and delivery of a new one-day risk communication training, which was piloted in June, 2017 and is now delivered nationally.
- Wrote a NOAA Social Science Tools for Coastal Programs guidebook on risk communication.
- Created an interactive role-play training activity, which combines real-world scenarios and interdisciplinary social science research to teach and reinforce risk communication best practices

**The Press of Atlantic City**  
Environment and News Staff Writer

April, 2010 – January, 2014

- Conceived and developed complex story-telling projects about coastal hazards, which required collaboration and project management with multiple departments on tight deadlines.
- Acted as an informal community liaison following Hurricane Sandy, providing individual-level explanations of fast-changing state and federal flood policy to residents and local officials.
- Wrote extensively about FEMA Region 2 Coastal RiskMap development process and changing NFIP policies, including Biggert-Waters Act implementation and the release of 2012 advisory base flood maps.

**Selected Skills**

- Community and stakeholder engagement design and execution that incorporates risk communication practices and a trauma-aware communication framework.
- Facilitation and training, which incorporates instructional design, adult learning theory, and social science research related to risk perception and communication.
- Community-Based Social Marketing as a method to identify and target behavior change.