Presenter
Liz Hartje - SCDHEC-OCRM

MyCoast South Carolina: Enhancing Public Awareness of Coastal Vulnerability through Citizen Engagement

South Carolina's natural and built environments along the coast are vulnerable to a number of threats including tidal flooding, hurricanes and tropical storms, and marine debris. These threats impact the coastline, residents, and visitors in different ways. Risk communication, including enhancing public awareness of the hazards associated with living near the coast, is an important part of coastal management. Produced by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, MyCoast South Carolina is an application designed to engage the public, visualize the impact of coastal hazards, collect data, and increase awareness of coastal vulnerability among decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public. The web and mobile application allows users to upload photos and log information using four reporting tools: King Tides, Storm Witness, Abandoned Boats, and Beach Cleanups. This presentation will focus on the King Tides reporting tool, which allows users to document the effects of extreme tide events on beaches, private property, and public infrastructure. The simple, user-friendly design of MyCoast has attracted over 800 members and generated more than 1,000 user-submitted reports in South Carolina since its launch in 2014. In addition to collecting data from users, MyCoast gathers and appends location, weather, and tidal information, linking quantitative data with qualitative, photo-based reports. Individual reports, photographs, and interactive maps are displayed on the MyCoast website for public viewing. The MyCoast platform has enabled DHEC to more efficiently share data, coordinate with state and local governmental entities, and prioritize hazard-related response activities. New users may register at http://www.MyCoast.org/SC via desktop, smartphone or tablet. For questions, contact Liz Hartje, Coastal Projects Manager at 843-953-9237 (hartjeen@dhec.sc.gov).