



SERPPAS Focus Area: Coastal Resilience and Regional Adaptation

The Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) Coastal Resilience and Regional Adaptation Work Group fosters collaboration among Federal, State and local partners to build capacity, develop plans, share resources, and implement projects that increase resilience for military installations and communities. With a specific focus on comprehensive planning and integrating natural infrastructure into the resilience strategies, the Work Group provides significant benefits to all partners and their respective missions.

The SERPPAS Coastal Resilience and Regional Adaptation Work Group includes representatives from DoD and the military services, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency, State Coastal and Marine Resources Programs, Sea Grant Programs, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, other NGOs, local governments, and academic partners.

Background

Extreme weather events and changes in environmental conditions, including increasing frequency of hazards such as hurricanes, flooding, sea level rise, drought and wildfires, put military readiness, natural resources, communities and working lands at risk. These serious threats to mission assurance and mission-essential functions require collaboration to successfully enhance resilience across geographical and governance boundaries.

SERPPAS federal and state partners work together with NGOs, local community representatives and academic partners to understand and address climate resilience across the interdependent ecosystem of installations and communities. The Work Group supports new and existing partnerships to advance climate adaptation and has



Marines run to help push a car out of floodwaters on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune after heavy rains from Tropical Storm Florence impacted the base, Sept. 15, 2018. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Isaiah Gomez

fostered plans and projects that emphasize nature-based infrastructure that both protects vulnerable communities and enhances natural resources.

Mission Benefit

The increase in shared knowledge, resources and tools will serve to better conserve and protect our people, our military installations, our lands, waters and wildlife, our towns and cities, our forests and farms, our economic opportunity, and our quality of life. Regional collaboration and coordination on resilience strategies will help sustain the military mission by: minimizing loss of coastal training infrastructure or interruption of operations; minimizing the potential for new coastal species placement on the endangered species list and/or critical habitat designated in the vicinity of military installations; prioritizing watershed protection for increased water supply resilience and flood mitigation; minimizing damage to storm water systems and other utilities shared between bases and communities; and increase the effectiveness of joint installation and community planning for and adapting to severe climate change impacts.



Milestones

- + In 2014, Department of Defense has identified climate change as a critical national security risk, threat multiplier and top management challenge in the Quadrennial Defense Review and developed the *2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap*.
- + In 2016, DOD policy was developed to ensure that all operations, planning activities, business process and resource allocation decisions considered climate change.
- + *Report on the Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense, 2019*, assessed the vulnerabilities of 79 mission assurance priority installations and found flooding, wildfire, drought and multiple hazards at more than 60 installations.
- + In 2018, 2019 and 2020 authorities used to develop agreements to limit encroachment, 10 U.S. Code § 2684a, were expanded to include climate impacts and allow DoD to take action off-base in response to climate change threats to military readiness.
- + In August 2019 the Work Group partnered with Georgia Sea Grant to host a workshop. Among the outcomes were projects ideas that resulted in proposals to the Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund and the establishment of partnerships between universities and DOD.
- + In 2021, DOD released its climate adaption plan that includes lines of effort that reflect many of the objectives that the Work Group has included its strategic plan.

Accomplishments

- + Holds monthly work group virtual meetings to engage partners and share new research and information since October 2020.
- + In 2020, a partnership with Pew Charitable Trust was established to develop the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative with the goal to support the migration, conservation, and restoration of one million acres of salt marsh in the South Atlantic states. In 2021, SASMI established a separate steering committee, coordinator and now operates as an independent group.

- + In 2021, University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant was successful in funding a Coastal Resilience DoD Liaison position with support from NOAA/National Sea Grant and SERPPAS. The Liaison now leads the Work Group.

Future Focus Area Objectives

1. Continue building partnerships and capacity focused on connecting DoD installations and surrounding communities on resilience planning and actions, with an initial focus in coastal areas.
2. Enhance the SERPPAS Good Map by adding resilience related data that will help identify vulnerabilities to climate and weather-related risks as well as identify further research and data gaps.
3. Develop plans and implement projects involving nature-based solutions, such as living shorelines, oyster reefs, and saltmarsh conservation, based on DoD and community vulnerabilities and natural / cultural resource benefits.
4. Develop and share resources on authorities, funding, and tools from key federal and state agencies focused on resilience to changing environmental conditions to assist on the ground projects and identify future needs.
5. Continue to explore how extreme weather and changing environmental conditions are influencing the other SERPPAS focus areas and identify opportunities to collaborate.
6. Explore opportunities to evaluate and measure success of nature-based, natural infrastructure solutions in lessening vulnerabilities to climate and weather-related events impacting military installation resilience.
7. Consider how best to expand and include participation of Federal, State and local partners that are focused on community resilience but have not historically been part of the SERPPAS community.