

Congressional Briefing: Coastal Resiliency – The Convergence of Scientific Tools for
Advancing Environmental Restoration and Economic Growth
March 25, 2014

One of the issues discussed at NAML's meeting in March in Washington, D.C. this year was to look for ways to raise NAML's visibility with key decision makers which was part of the rationale for a March 25th briefing on Capitol Hill.

The University of Chicago and the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) are now formally affiliated. Because of this new affiliation, the University was interested in sponsoring a briefing on the subject of resiliency before interested Congressional staff, agency officials, and others.

Both Dr. Jim Sanders from Skidaway Institute of Oceanography and Dr. Felicia Coleman, Director of the Florida State University Coastal & Marine Laboratory joined Dr. Chris Neill from MBL and Dr. Rick Stevens from Argonne National Laboratory to conduct this briefing – which was designed to highlight the converging role of science in helping communities become more resilient to changing environmental conditions. Ms. Margaret Davidson from NOAA's National Ocean Service, served as the panel's moderator. The briefing was staged as a brown bag lunchtime briefing which took place in the Capitol Visitor Center.

It is clear from this briefing that the subject of resiliency – with all of its different perspectives – is of significant interest on Capitol Hill. A number of bills have been introduced thus far, many with a severe weather focus and/or natural disaster perspective. There are also a number of interagency committees continuing to work through the issue from their various perspectives. As a result, between 80 and 90 Congressional and agency officials attended. Each speaker made about 10 minutes of opening remarks focusing on the issues and challenges confronting their local or regional situation and then the session was opened up for questions and discussion.