

Processes for Information Access

Create a process to enable managers to evaluate regional climate models, reports and relevant websites to better understand localized climate impacts

Managers, planners and others interested in engaging in wetland climate adaptation are often frustrated by both a dearth and an overabundance of information. Because there is so much information targeting so many different audiences and provided by so many organizations in so many ways, it can be difficult to obtain accurate, relevant information. Many groups have worked to address this issue, but more outreach and communication is necessary to make key sources known. Further, there is a need to more directly connect and improve communication between scientists and practitioners. Contextualizing new scientific information to focus specifically on wetland conservation and restoration can be more effective than more generic efforts.

Although wetland forums or workshops as described in Best Practice #1 may be one element of this Best Practice, the focus here is on *processes* as a way to enable more sustained, targeted and diverse approaches to supporting information access and use. Existing planning activities involve processes that regularly engage stakeholders and can be used to bring new climate information forward for consideration. This approach has the benefit of leveraging existing forums and activities in which people are already engaged, in contrast to approaches that invite people to get information through separate or new means.

To ensure that information use is maximized for its intended purpose, it is critical to understand the target audience and what they consider trusted, familiar sources of information.

On a general level, there are two types of information sources that people are most likely to use to inform wetlands management for climate adaptation: professional social networks comprised of regular human interactions and adaptation websites (web-based social network sites, and other websites and clearinghouses).

Professional colleagues are the primary source of new information for most natural resource managers. People gain knowledge and information from colleagues and others with whom they interact on a regular basis either in person or via phone or email. Professional social networks—groups of professionals with common interests—should be established that bring together climate and wetland professionals in a collaborative fashion. These collaboratives can be used to sustain targeted engagement of networked professionals.

Climate adaptation websites and social networking websites focused on wetlands management can serve as a centralized hub of relevant information, and provide additional options for information access that might not readily exist through regular professional interactions. In addition to specific websites, these can include a web-based team of adaptation experts providing help desk or reference librarian-type services.

These professional collaboratives, other social networks, and websites can be an excellent way to share locally relevant data such as downscale climate models and decision support tools which are often difficult to interpret and apply.

Case Example | Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Municipal Adaptation & Resiliency Service

The Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a non-profit organization that brings together a coalition of mayors and other local officials from the United States and Canada to support Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River restoration and protection. One of GLSLCI's many projects is the Municipal Adaptation & Resiliency Service (MARS). The goal is to accelerate adaptation action for member municipalities by sharing information and resources and creating an engaged regional community.

MARS includes the following components:

- 1) **Call to Action.** This includes self-defined adaptation activities that municipalities will undertake. Twelve municipalities have completed Call to Action forms providing information on adaptation measures, funding, partners and other relevant information.
- 2) **Community of Practice.** The MARS CoP is facilitated by the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources (OCCIAR) and includes resources such as a library, case studies from around the country, fact sheets, adaptation tools, including risk assessment tools, historical and future climate data, news articles, and a calendar of events.
- 3) **Training for municipalities, hosted by Clean Air Partnership.** There have been nine webinars covering a range of topics and highlighting case studies of GLSLCI member municipalities.
- 4) **A MARS Award based on submitted Call to Actions.**
- 5) **Demonstration projects.**



Challenges and Benefits

Many information-sharing projects have been developed by natural scientists with little communication or engagement with practitioners. Thus, while the quality of information is typically high, the actual use of the information is often low. In part, this is because it can be difficult to get funding and engagement to support the user-driven approach necessary to maximize the science-practice connection and, in part, it is because over-commitment by practitioners can make getting and maintaining engagement difficult.

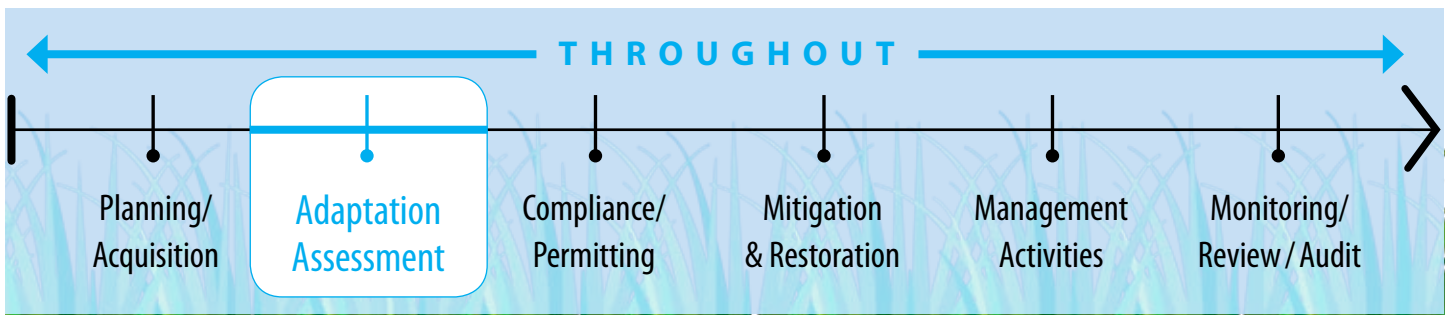
If successful, information access and sharing processes and portals can dramatically increase the likelihood that restoration planners and practitioners will effectively incorporate climate considerations into their work, thereby increasing the likelihood of long-term conservation and restoration success.

Who should implement the practice?

This practice can be initiated by a wide range of groups, but to be successful it requires collaboration between the people who will be using the information, those who are creating the information, and those who are providing the options for information access. Typically this will include scientists from government and academia, managers and practitioners from private, non-profit, government and community groups, and a "boundary organization" such as Great Lakes Integrated Sciences + Assessments (GLISA) or Michigan Sea Grant.



When should this practice happen?



Tools and Resources

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative – Municipal Adaptation & Resiliency Service (MARS) | www.ccadaptation.ca/en/mars

Climate Change Adaptation Community of Practice | Online community where researchers, experts, policymakers and practitioners can exchange information and ideas to contribute to advancing knowledge and action in climate change adaptation. | www.ccadaptation.ca/en/landing

Great Lakes Integrated Sciences + Assessments Center (GLISA) | Brings together collaborators who are working to address specific problems related to climate change in the Great Lakes region. | www.glisacclimate.org

San Francisco Bay Area – Adapting to Rising Tides (ART) | Collaborative planning project engaging local, regional, state and federal stakeholders to increase the San Francisco Bay Area's preparedness and resilience. | www.adaptingtorisingtides.org

The Georgetown Climate Center's Adaptation Clearinghouse | Provides a wealth of information, including a searchable library of existing adaptation policy and analysis. | www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/clearinghouse

Collaboratory for Adaptation to Climate Change | National Science Foundation-funded project involving University of Notre Dame and The Nature Conservancy compiling and disseminating information in support of research, education, and outreach on climate change adaptation. | <https://adapt.nd.edu/>

