

# CRMC talks climate change to Realtors

In Rhode Island, there is little to no memory of the last major hurricane - Hurricane Carol in 1954 – and that’s a problem, says Grover Fugate, executive director of the Rhode Island CRMC.

“There’s no institutional memory of the last big hurricane,” he said to a classroom of Rhode Island Association of Realtors members earlier this month. “We don’t want to wait for a 100-year event to find out what it’s going to do to us. We want to predict it now.”

That’s what the CRMC is doing, precisely, through a series of sea level rise, storm surge, flooding, erosion, and risk assessment mapping tools developed through its R.I. Shoreline Change (Beach) Special Area Management Plan. The SAMP evaluates the changing conditions along the entire state’s shoreline, and provides guidance for both coastal applicants and homeowners, and coastal municipal managers.

“We won’t need the next big hurricane to wake us up; it will come with the next one foot of sea level rise, which will happen in the next 20 to 30 years,” he told a Newport Realtors crowd last summer. “This will transform the real estate market.”

The CRMC is in a unique position to plan for these major changes, and to educate coastal managers and planners, as well as the public. And with a new coastal application guidance chapter in the Beach SAMP, awareness of the inherent risks will be key to Rhode Island’s ability to be resilient in the face of climate change and sea level rise. It is something Fugate speaks of often.

“There are three ways to deal with climate change and sea level rise: mitigation, adaptation, or suffering,” he told the Newport Realtors. “The extent [you accomplish] of the first two determines the extent of the third.”



Grover Fugate speaks to Rhode Island Association of Realtors members in Newport

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## New CRMC staff - meet our ocean engineers

The CRMC has hired engineers to fill two newly created ocean engineering positions within the agency.

David Ciochetto, an aerospace and ocean engineer, and Justin Skenyon, an ocean engineer, joined the staff in January. Skenyon will be largely focusing his efforts on the complicated wind energy permitting projects before the CRMC, while Ciochetto will be rounding out the permit staff, as well as working on wind energy projects.



David Ciochetto, left, and Justin Skenyon, right, joined CRMC in January.

The CRMC has operated without a full complement of engineers for more than three years, after two of its longtime staff retired. Ciochetto, who graduated first from Boston University and then Virginia Polytechnic Institute, has worked over the last 20 years in academia, including Michigan Technological University where he worked in the physics department; Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution where he served as engineering and operations support for physical oceanographic field and laboratory research; Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia; and Virginia Tech.

Justin Skenyon graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a Bachelor’s in ocean engineering and a focus in underwater archaeology. Previous to his start at the CRMC, Skenyon worked for three years for Navetek, Ltd., developing early stage ship design software and methods for the computation of ship stabilization. During his time at URI he also worked on a coastal construction and engineering proposal to address beach erosion, on a study of the acoustics and frequency of the Newport Bridge, as well as Nautilus Live under the direction of Dr. Robert Ballard, and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency studying marsh erosion.

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