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Stephanie Otts:

Well, good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us here at the National Sea Grant Law Center's 2022 webinar series. My name is Stephanie Otts, I'm the director of the National Sea Grant Law Center. And we're so excited to see everyone here today. We are recording the webinar and we will be sharing it on our website following the event. And so if you have any colleagues or anyone who haven't been able to join us here today, you will have the opportunity to share the video. I'm excited to welcome our speakers for today. Shana Jones is the Legal Program director at Georgia Sea Grant. And Michelle Covi is the Department of Defense Liaison. I'm going to allow them to give more detailed introductions, but we are very excited to hear about the project and the work that they've been doing with SERPPAS, so this initiative started with some funding from the National Sea Grant Law Center, so for those of you who may be new, the National Sea Grant Law Center is one of the 34 Sea Grant programs around the country.

Stephanie Otts:

And we were established to provide legal research education and outreach to the entire Sea Grant network, so we do a mix of legal research here by our attorneys that are based at the University of Mississippi's School of Law. But then one of the other big components of our work is to help build the capacity of the wider Sea Grant network to address legal issues and to conduct their own legal research and outreach activities on the state level. And so for several years, we've had a small grant competition where programs could apply for funding to kind of try out new things or new initiatives. And so we're excited to highlight and provide this opportunity for Shana and Michelle to talk about their work with the Department of Defense. If you have questions, please use the chat box during the presentation. We'll have time following the speakers to try to answer those questions. And when those of us who aren't speaking might be able to answer them as we go along as well. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Shana.

Shana Jones:

Thank you so much, Stephanie. And thank you also for supporting this work. It has been a real pleasure and learning experience and maybe one of the proudest things I've ever been part of. And it started with the small competition, \$20,000, and it really has blossomed into some great partnerships, so we're super excited to talk about it. And I'll talk first and then Michelle will end and that'll be really exciting, so thank you for giving us the opportunity to talk about the emerging partnerships we are having with military installations and a group called SERPPAS and just to give some background, I'm going to just talk first about why the military-resilience connection matters at all, why we might want to care? And then who and what is SERPPAS? Because it is the land of acronyms and so we thought that would be helpful.

Shana Jones:

And then how we got here, which was the small grants competition and what was funded under that? And then some outcomes from that work. And it really, I guess, we all know this we're in Sea Grant, but the partner and connection networking was very valuable and it was a really important aspect and support for all of this, so thank you. Why does the military-resilience connection matter? The military is as vulnerable to the climate as anyone else, and is aware of it and studies it. And so in 2019, DoD released a report detailing vulnerabilities at 79 mission assurance priority installations. Those are all their terms and they mean things to them. And of course they talked about wildfire, drought, and desertification, and thawing permafrost. But flooding and weather posed the greatest risk and they posed great risk to coastal installations too. And that's our wheelhouse, that's our expertise.

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Shana Jones:

And just some examples you all may be well aware Michelle used to work in Virginia, but North Naval Station Norfolk is the largest US Naval base, it may be the largest Naval base in the world, is impacted by nuisance flooding from high tide events all the time. Weather causes delay in ship repairs that costs money. Over the past 11 years, nine major floods have caused damage to infrastructure and the Navy's paying attention it's not good. Camp Lejeune is another example. This was identified as a vital Marine base threatened by rising sea level. There's lots of assessments about what this Marine base is facing. Hurricane Florence caused \$3 billion in damage because of aged infrastructure. And this is happening in Norfolk and certainly Camp Lejeune. It's not just the installation, it's the people. And the people don't live on the installation, 90% sometimes live outside in the communities that we serve.

Shana Jones:

And the military is growing more and more aware that the resilience of the outside community matters greatly to the internal fence line resilience also. A poster child probably is Air Force Base Tyndall in the Florida Panhandle. It was horribly hit by Hurricane Michael just destroyed buildings and just acres and acres of trees, \$5 billion of damage. It is being rebuilt as the base of the future. And they're doing all kinds of interesting nature based infrastructure projects and things like that, but they want to rebuild it having buildings that withstand 220 mph winds. And we could learn from those innovations and so I think that the more we can partner and learn there's opportunity for us to take some of that knowledge and maybe apply it in our communities or at least be aware of it, so there's that opportunity as well working with our installations.

Shana Jones:

And every new community brings new ways of thinking. And one term of art at the workshop, which I'll talk about. The Tyndall folks talked about the need to develop a second line of defense. I thought that was such a great idea for the concept of resilience, of we all just want a first line of defense of our beach and dunes, but maybe we want a second line of defense. And I loved that idea because it seems so military, right? To think of lines of defense like that. But it's also, I think something that might be a compelling front term of art for when we work with communities generally, of this is how we want to think. We want to think in lines of defense to protect, to create more resilient communities. And then this is just to give you an idea of how they're thinking, they're thinking about their roads, they're thinking about security, they're thinking about hydrology, they're thinking about fire, and all of these things impact our communities too.

Shana Jones:

Again, this was the report that DoD issued, out of the 79 installations they looked at 60 are affected by flooding. And then the three kind of areas of focus that they are focusing on are high performance and sustainable building requirements. And we're lawyers that gets right into local zoning and land use and building requirements and all the things. Creation of master plans, the military plans a lot, and they do internal plans, but they also do joint land use plans with local community also. And so there's an emphasis on resilience there. And then they're interested in engineering. These are engineering people, a lot of them, and they think like that. And so they're looking at best practices of nature based engineering, but also gray engineering and all the ways that they can connect their assets. A really important law since this is Sea Grant Law folks is that the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act 2019 actually defined military installation resilience for the first time.

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Shana Jones:

And it also provided some important funding. And this is important because it now allows military to funds all kinds of things, of course, but this actually authorizes them to fund resiliency projects in the local communities outside of the fence line. And that could be important to some of our constituents as well, so here is how the military defines resilience for military installation resilience. It means capability of the installation to avoid, prepare for, minimize the effect of, adapt to, and recover from extreme weather events. And this is the important new thing, is that all of these events have the potential to adversely affect the military installation. Oops, I went backwards. Or, and this is the or that lawyers love right? Essential transportation, logistical, or other necessary resources outside of the military installation, so this is just legal acknowledgement that the military resilience is both inside the fence line and outside.

Shana Jones:

And this matters for funding, it matters for what they're authorized to do and all kinds of things. The military already has a significant program related to land acquisition. And so this language that passed in the John S. McCain Act allows this land acquisition program to expand. And Michelle can correct me because she's now way more knowledgeable about these things than I am. But this program is called REPI, and that's a term of art that we've now learned and you throw around like everybody knows it, but it's the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program. And it was established in the early 2000s, and it's a tool that DoD uses to acquire land outside of the fence line. And the reason they do this is that they have issues with encroachment, so they have issues with light pollution or little neighborhoods that build up right next to the installation.

Shana Jones:

People complain about noise, they complain about the control burns, they don't like guys parachuting in their pools. You know, it's not good to have development right next to the installation. And the other thing that they're doing and several of the installations on the coast do this, but certainly Fort Benning does it, is they have endangered species. And so they have to do all these things on the installation to protect for gopher tortoise, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, for example. But the problem with protecting it is that it limits their ability to do maneuvers, or drive tanks around, and blow up things, right? And so by acquiring land outside of the installation, they can have those habitats there, and they can meet their environmental ESA goals and they can do all the things. And it allows them also to have protected habitat for species, so it's both encroachment, which involves new land use, and all the zoning, and all the things, but also endangered species.

Shana Jones:

That program's been established since the early 2000, and it's been important. The more I learn about it, the more I think it'd be good for the Sea Grant network folks and for folks working in resilience to understand it because DoD has a lot of funding and they've done some large scale land acquisition. And in coastal areas, this has a lot of potential to promote resilience by creating buffers, and protect property and infrastructure from flooding and storm surge, and create corridors and all the things that we want to see as we help our communities become more resilient, so I'm really grateful that I've learned about this program, because I think that this is a way we can really help local communities trying to improve resilience, and create open space, and do all of those kinds of things. And REPI's been really important to Georgia.

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Shana Jones:

DoD has spent more REPI money in Georgia than any other state. And this is a little bit of an older slide, but it's more than 293 million. Fort Stewart Liberty County, Liberty County is a coastal county. It's a little bit south of Savannah. There's been enormous land acquisition efforts to protect forested land and keep it from development, from sprawl, from Savannah, basically. And this is really important for our flood plains here and for the watershed, so it's been quite impactful in Liberty County. Something that happened very recently in Georgia was maybe one of largest coastal land acquisition efforts I've heard on the Eastern seaboard. It's a project outside of Camden County, which is north of Jacksonville. Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base is there. And working with the state, the Nature Conservancy, Georgia DNR, DoD, Conservation Fund, the Open Space Institute, the list goes on and on, private foundations, approximately 24,000 acres have been preserved and conserved. And this is coastal land.

Shana Jones:

This is all land that some developer some day could have a bunch of units for people. And that's exactly why they protected it, was to keep it protected. And it serves all these goals of protecting gofer tortoise and doing the floodplain management, all those things. But the Navy likes it, it keeps people from moving too close and that's important to them, so there's a lot of win/win/win elements to these programs. And this was a really big one for Georgia, so these are just some benefits. REPI is a program and Michelle's actually served on like a review panel, I think for them. The benefits for the military is they want to be able to be ready in the end, they use terms like lethality. They want to be ready to fight wars and that's their job, so they want to be able to train, they want to be able to shoot guns, they want to drive tanks, they don't want to have lost training days because roads are flooded, they want to address noise, they want to be able to do night vision stuff.

Shana Jones:

And then the communities can really benefit because this is an important partner. Sometimes it can be difficult to have a military installation in your community, but they also are economic drivers, they are also sources of community identity and community itself. And there's a lot of benefits to having partnerships that the military brings. Conserving these lands can create economic benefits for recreation. The land conserved in Georgia, for example, by Kings Bay is a wildlife management area, is a recreational asset. You can hunt there, and you can hike there, and that's a use that can benefit the state and people. There's a lot of elements that are benefits that are provided by REPI, so that's an overview quickly of a, and I see there's a question in the chat I'm going to look, does this program include considerations for incidental take for migratory birds under their migratory bird readiness rule? I would say so, but I don't want to answer it definitively.

Shana Jones:

I would say so, because as I have worked with now, the military folks, and we have a project now with Fort Benning, they follow every federal law as much as anyone else has to, and they follow it. They're rule followers. I mean, if you say anything about the military, if there's a rule they're following it, so I'd say the answer is yes, but I haven't experienced that, so I don't want to give you legal advice. Given all that background about why it's good for us to learn about these very important stakeholder is I want to talk a little bit about SERPPAS, so here's the big backdrop military cares about coastal resilience, military cares about climate, military cares about land acquisition and buffers. There's this organization in the Southeast called SERPPAS.

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Shana Jones:

So this is when we receive funding, we partner with SERPPAS and they are the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability, and this is a DoD led partnership in the Southeast. And they were created in 2005 after REPI was created, the land acquisition programs that I talked about, to better collaborate. And so this is a network that involves DoD, the state agency heads of the Natural Resources agencies in the state, usually the forest commissions of the state are part, tons of federal agencies, US Forest Service, Ag, you name it, they're there. And then also a lot of land conservation groups, like the Nature Conservancy is a big partner too. And they were created to just try to think about landscape scale decision making, because the military is seeing we can do things parcel by parcel, but to really make a difference it does need to be 24,000 acres outside of King's Bay for it to matter, really conserve habitat, protect gopher tortoise, do the buffer and all the things, so SERPPAS was created to bring everybody together so people could collaborate.

Shana Jones:

And it includes North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. And Georgia works with all these states all the time in various partnerships, so we wanted to work with SERPPAS. SERPPAS is also, I think, an organization that like Sea Grant has a mission to be collaborative, science driven, problem solving, have worked with partnerships to find common ground. And so that was another reason that we were interested in engaging with them, and this is part of their mission. And here's just a slide of all the groups, all the governments that are involved in it, so very much about building trust, very much about connecting and trying to collaborate, really trying to leverage resources. REPI is a program and this is where Michelle could definitely weigh in. They want to see the match, they want to see the state match, they want to see the local match, if possible. They want to see TNC, they want to see the private foundation.

Shana Jones:

All of that is really important, so these discussions are really important. And then of course everybody's trying to do the same kind of thing, so how can we work together and learn from each other? That's what SERPPAS is. And the truth of it is they really started with fire, with control burns, and tortoise, and red-cockaded woodpecker. Those are really big, important issues in the south. Those species are endangered or potentially endangered in the case of the gopher tortoise, and it was really changing what you could do on federal lands, including installations, so the Longleaf conservation effort in Southeast has been quite successful, and so has the gopher tortoise initiative that came out of these things. Georgia had a goal, I think of getting to 64 viable gopher tortoise populations by 2025, and we're at 62 already. I mean, this has been a really cool success story in that context.

Shana Jones:

And so that's where they've been kind of known and they've done a lot. They are turning and really focusing more on coastal resilience and regional adaptation, so they're a little newer to the game to this. It's not that they haven't cared or anything like that, but this has not been their primary focus. And so they were really interested in talking with us. They did have a strategic plan. They had coastal resiliency in it. They wanted to learn more, they wanted improve coastal resilience. They wanted an engagement process, et cetera, et cetera. And they wanted a collaborative program. And so they were moving in this direction. They knew they wanted to do it. They knew they wanted nature based solutions. They knew they wanted natural infrastructure, so that led to how do we get here? How do we become friends?

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Shana Jones:

In the spring of 2018 leadership and it was Mark Risse frankly from Georgia Sea Grant, who was at a meeting and he met some of the SERPPAS folks. And then they generally meet in Atlanta, so it was easy for me to go. And we started talking and truly, they didn't know a lot about Sea Grant. They knew a lot about Ag extension because they work with forestry guys for control burns, but they quickly understood the analogy, right? They're like, wow, there's this whole group of people who do this and they already have connections, they work in communities, they already know these things. And they really were excited that this already existed and they didn't know about Sea Grant, so after this meeting, we were talking about, gosh, we need to work together, we need to do stuff. The heavens opened and the National Sea Grant Law Center issued a funding opportunity to enhance capacity for our law programs. And we talked to SERPPAS and they were like, yeah, let's do this.

Shana Jones:

We need to learn more about you and Shana and other Sea Grant people need to learn more about them. This was the time REPI didn't trip off my tongue, I didn't know these terms of art. I didn't understand this world at all. And so we wrote a grant and we were funded and we were super excited about that because we needed the opportunity to learn more and to engage and to figure out each other and if it made sense to work together. And so this is what we received funding to do. And the law angle, just to digress a little, is that in the end, a lot of this comes to zoning, right? Or state specific programs that protect marsh or wetlands. That was very much of interest to them too, because some of the goals the military wants to see are very dependent on state and local action, so anyway, we received funding to continue to develop our capacity, working with Sea Grant programs in the Southeast, and folks from Mississippi to North Carolina came. Thank you, if you're on the call.

Shana Jones:

To talk about what we need to know, what we do know. We hosted a summer workshop among partners. We were to develop a short work plan from that workshop. And we were to produce a law review article for the Sea Grant Law Journal. And we did do all those things, it was great. This was the Coastal Resilience Workshop we had in 2019. And we had 80 participants. And it turned out we had some fancy people. I didn't even know quite how fancy they were, from DoD. And we brought together SERPPAS, and Sea Grant resilience folks, and Coastal Zone Management people, and military installations. And we understand in each other, what are the needs? And so we had military folks talking, but we also had folks from coastal state agencies saying, I call, I don't know who to call. There is a lack, there's a disconnect. And so we talked about all of those things. And so we concluded with a brainstorming session about what we could do next. And these are just some pictures.

Shana Jones:

It was well attended, we had ice cream at the break by the way, which was like, I can never have a meeting with these people and not offer ice cream because that was by far, like everyone loved that, but it was very engaged and people were excited and it was fun. And I think it was truly one of those things where you had new people, everyone was learning and that always makes for a good meeting. And so this is just an example of some of the brainstorming that was done. So the need for military readiness on the coast was significant. DoD is interested in this very much. There's a lot of discussion about REPI programs having potential to really support coastal resilience efforts, and there's just a significant amount of funding that's potentially possible. And Michelle can certainly talk more about

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that. We developed these relationships and projects. For example, we worked with Kings Bay and with the Nature Conservancy for a NFWF grant, we got a planning grant from NFWF out of this.

Shana Jones:

Pew Charitable Trust came and is been working on a oyster kind of living shoreline initiative, as well as the South Atlantic, South Atlantic Marsh and... I never can remember what it stands for, but it's an initiative to conserve marsh that we've been involved in. And then discussion started occurring from like military leadership and Sea Grant higher ups way above my pay grade, people began talking about yeah, we really should work together and then Addie and I presented at Social Coast, she's with SERPPAS, she's the director and coordinator of SERPPAS and then a lost law fellow, the law students that I work with came and supported the workshop which was really great. They managed all the breakout groups and took notes, and then one of the law students led the writing of a law journal. And actually DoD really liked it, so their center at Texas A&M kind of repackaged it, and I've seen it at other themes as like an explanation, which is really nice, so the student Amelia just did a fabulous job. South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative, that's what it is.

Shana Jones:

That's a really cool initiative that we're now participating in that is modeled on the Longleaf initiative that SERPPAS was involved with, with lots of other groups of how are we going to do landscape scale conservation of long leaf pine or restoration. That worked pretty well or it's working pretty well, so there's a lot of interest in doing a similar type of initiative with Salt Marsh. How are we going to work together to conserve large lots of salt marsh, given that it's going to need to migrate and due to sea level rise. And there's several folks from Sea Grant that are involved in that initiative too, but talking a lot and I'm going to shut up really quickly. Most exciting was that this effort led to setting the stage to get a liaison, and that was Michelle. And all of this is a lot, and it's important, and we need a leader, we need a coordinator, and we need someone who can serve as that voice, and knowledge, and brain between DoD, and NOAA, and Sea Grant, and communities and help put it all together, it's pretty clear.

Shana Jones:

And so this initiative set the stage for, to get funding for a liaison. And we were funded. The Sea Grant program came out, liaison opportunity, we talked to DoD, we talked to NOAA, we had people in the Pentagon write the letter support, right? Like people who they're on the big chart, it was really great. And in addition to the support from NOAA, but we have match from DoD, which is a really cool thing. And there's no question that the fact that we had laid the groundwork and built the partnerships and had the conversations to identify what we could do, what we would like to do, is I think why we got funded because it spoke to the need and it was clear partnership. And it was almost an easy grant to write for the liaison because if it hadn't come out, we would've needed Michelle anyway, because it's a lot of work and it's a lot to know. Really, really exciting that we were funded because of this. And I think this is the last slide I have before Michelle.

Shana Jones:

This was the goals of the liaison funding. And it's to facilitate the transfer of information between NOAA, Sea Grant, and military installations. DoD, I think sees quite rightly that Sea Grant has significant stakeholder engagement and community resilience capacity. There is no need to reinvent the wheel here. It is already a lot of talented folks are doing really good work. And so why not partner? And then just the transfer of findings. This is a of what we do, right, is how do we communicate with each other as

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we learn how to work with some of these communities in these areas. What can we do better? What can we learn? How can this maybe even become a peer group where these communities are talking to each other and supporting each other could even be possible? Those were the overall goals and really it led to the hiring of Michelle who's just killing it and marching forward. And will talk next, but while Michelle you... I'll unshare. And if there's any questions while we change, I'm happy to answer them.

Michelle Covi:

I do want to.

Shana Jones:

Just add, and correct, and do all the things.

Michelle Covi:

I did want to clarify one thing.

Shana Jones:

Yeah.

Michelle Covi:

That you said about REPI and you talked a lot about land acquisition, and I just wanted to be really clear that when they use those REPI funds, the DoD does not hold that land.

Shana Jones:

That's true. That's right.

Michelle Covi:

Generally what they would call it was a cost sharing partnership, so usually they partner with a land trust, or with the state, or some other entity, so I just wanted to make sure people didn't think that the REPI funds were used to expand the base.

Shana Jones:

I'm so very glad you said that because it's important. And I imagine there's lawyers, a bunch of lawyers on here, right, is that these are a lot of them are held in trust or under conservation easement with either the state, or often the Nature Conservancy, or a land trust. And that's how it works. And so that's why it allows for a lot of win/win because it's not like they become fenced off places where you can't do anything, you can, that's how you can hunt on them. That's how you can recreate on them. That's how you can ride bikes on them. They just don't go poof and you can't get on them anymore, but that's a really important, important point Michelle, thank you.

Michelle Covi:

Great, so I'll go ahead and share my screen. Okay, can you all see that?

Stephanie Otts:

Yep, you're good.

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Michelle Covi:

Is that the right one.

Stephanie Otts:

Yep.

Michelle Covi:

Okay, good. Let's see. Oops, I moved it so it paused. There we go. Okay, great. Some of your folks may have met me before I was in this position. As Shana mentioned, I was previously with Virginia Sea Grant at Old Dominion University as a coastal resilience specialist, as a Virginia Sea Grant extension partner. And that's where I first got oriented and living in a defense community as the term of art is, there in Norfolk and had the opportunity to work with one of the early efforts in Norfolk to really try to integrate the community with the military there, because there's just so much of the economy and the life there is dependent upon the Navy there, so it was a great background to get into this work. But as Shana mentioned, sort of my short mission statement is to connect NOAA and Sea Grant coastal resilience resources and staff with DoD programs and defense communities.

Michelle Covi:

And I primarily work with the REPI program, but there are a couple of other programs, the Office of Defense Communities, local integration, no local something can't remember it right now. The old CC is another department that does a lot of the planning, so on one of Shana's slides, there was a note about compatible use planning. What used to be called joint land use planning. They do those programs now, and they have a newer program called the military installation resilience review that also comes out of that office, so those are programs that support generally they support a council of government or regional governmental planning entity that does a review of resilience for the defense community, for the community around the installations. And so that's another program that is something that we can connect with and perhaps used to create greater coastal resilience as well.

Michelle Covi:

What I've been doing since I started in September is I've really integrated into the REPI office. They had me, as Shana mentioned, as part of their review committees, looking at their grants, they have an internal grant or it's not really a grant it's more of a proposal that the installation will send to the REPI office to fund some of these easements and natural resources programs, and coastal resilience programs around the base. And they also have what they call the REPI challenge, which is in process right now where REPI funds and external partner, so rather than the money going to the base to provide the easements, it'll fund a partner. And many of the examples that Shana mentioned were REPI challenge examples as well. This year they're working together with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to make those even more available, so when the NOFO for the NFWF coastal resilience fund comes out, there will be a REPI component in that as well, so folks can actually apply in that pre-proposal and indicate that they're working with an installation and access some of those funds through the coastal resilience fund process this year.

Michelle Covi:

I'm also helping with a coastal resilience team they have a consultant that has coastal resilience expertise. And so we are creating sort of a team effort through some of their programs to add additional

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coastal resilience elements to the REPI program. In terms of the REPI challenges I mentioned, I've been supporting a couple of the applications, one in Alabama, Mississippi that is aiming to work with the Keesler Air Force Base to provide greater resilience to the air force base through building a living shoreline and another one in Savannah, Georgia that is looking to work with Hunter Army Airfield. And I'm working with one of Shana's colleagues on that proposal as well, so trying to support those. The REPI office sees me as someone that's going to go out and help people write really good proposals. And that's what they want is really good proposals. I've also been working SERPPAS and providing leadership to their coastal resilience and regional adaptation working group, so they have me as the lead on that now.

Michelle Covi:

One of the first orders of business that we have been working on was to do a better engagement with the state coastal programs. That's one thing that I noticed immediately was that there was not very much representation from the state coastal programs in their working group, so we've been learning about how each of the coastal programs in each of the states is working towards resilience. And then I'm also been representing SERPPAS in other coastal resilience initiatives where they've been asked to speak at various other events and things like that as the lead of that group. And I've also been involved as Shana has with the Southeast Salt Marsh Initiative, again, that grew out of the coastal resilience and regional adaptation working group. I've been leading the infrastructure and sustainable development topic team for that effort as Shana's been leading the policy team. One of the first things that I did in trying to understand how Sea Grant and SERPPAS and REPI could work together was I conducted a needs assessment from October through actually a couple weeks ago, I picked up a last interview. I interviewed 28 Sea Grant specialists and agents.

Michelle Covi:

And through that process, I found that almost all of them said that they were not working with their local military installation. There was actually one existing REPI connection, and that's in New Jersey with Navy Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey. And one Sea Grant person was co-leading a military installation resilience review with the old CC program. But that all the other folks I talked to were not directly connected, but most said that they would like more connections. Some said that they were connected through their local government or through some other network, but they were sort of at least one step away from directly engaging with their military installation. And they had difficulty knowing how to contact them. And they also wanted to know if coastal resilience was a priority for the military installation, so they had a lot of questions about what was going on. And I asked them, sort of why hadn't they engaged with their installation and they said really that knowing who and how to contact, navigating the command structure was a barrier to them.

Michelle Covi:

Some of them who had made some relationships noted that the command changed frequently, and that was a barrier to making that relationship long term. And then just understanding the priorities of the base in relationship to the community. They felt like the base seemed isolated, folks from the base didn't come out to their events and they didn't really know how to invite them. And some of the folks I talked to said, they didn't even know if they were using the right language. Is this the right way to talk about coastal resilience or climate change? Is it okay to say climate change, for example? They wanted some additional guidance, but they also saw lots of potential opportunities to work with the base. And they thought that better coordination and collaboration would be an asset to both their Sea Grant

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program, their coastal resilience program, and also to the base's program in helping that community to become more resilient. They would like to include installation staff on their networks.

Michelle Covi:

And in communities of practice, some mentioned they had trainings that might benefit some of the professionals that are on the base, such as match master naturalist trainings for natural resources, staff, or landscape professional training, if they needed to maintain green infrastructure or those kinds of things. And then some wanted to do projects such as living shoreline projects, or beach nourishment projects, stormwater projects, all those different types of projects. One of the folks I talked to was doing sort of a long term disaster recovery project, and thought that the military really had logistics down and would be a great lesson to those community people that were trying to learn about how to handle that long term recovery. And so she thought that, that connection would be really, really fruitful. And of course connecting, I heard a lot of research and education ideas as well, so there were lots of opportunities that people saw and uncovered as I started talking to them about what they could do with their base.

Michelle Covi:

My next steps that I'm working on is making information and resources available. I have a website that is focused on providing some information about funding and information, tools, and resources for defense communities. And also I'm looking to address these needs that were uncovered by the Sea Grant colleagues and trying to create communication pathways both ways so that when I have the opportunities to connect installation people directly to Sea Grant people, I will do that. And then also try to create those communication pathways the other way, and provide best practices on how to work with DoD, the different opportunities that are available. Some folks in my needs assessment said if they had example projects, that would be really helpful to them, so I'm working on trying to either stimulate those projects or raise those projects up and communicate those projects better.

Michelle Covi:

Naval Station Earle will be an example, a first example, but I'm hoping there'll be lots more, especially some more that are stimulated in the Southeast. And of course, I'm making myself available to directly assist people to make those connections. And we're going to have a follow up workshop this summer. And so that workshop, we're really going to try to dive deep into making those relationships, bringing some project examples and trying to bring all the people to the table that might be part of a team to make those projects stimulated and move them so that we can advance these partnerships to sort of the next level, so that's our hope. And that's all I have. I can do the stop sharing. And I think we have time for questions.

Stephanie Otts:

We have about 10 minutes for questions, so I encourage everyone to use the chat box, but we also have a small group, so I think we could ask to come off of mute, so if you wanted to do that, you could raise your hand and we can manage it that way, so if you have questions, let us know. While we're giving people a minute to think just wanted to point out that I did include the link to the law review article that Shana mentioned that was published in the Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal. And so the article does a great job of kind of covering the background and what was discussed at the workshop and how they put that together, so I encourage anyone who's interested to check that out.

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Stephanie Otts:

All right. Well, if we don't have any questions, I just want to thank Shana and Michelle so much for giving a presentation today and sharing this great information. I think it's just a wonderful partnership and who knows where it's going to go in the future. And so I think it's great to have, and so, yeah. Thanks everyone for joining us. Stay tuned. We're planning our second webinar. I think it's going to happen in April, Catherine Janasie and Olivia Deans from the National Sea Grant Law Center are going to talk about some of their PFAS PFOA work that they've been doing in presenting on at other conferences, so if there's anything that you'd like us to cover in future webinars, please let us know. We're also trying something new. When you log off of the Zoom, that you should get a link or a popup for a survey, so please let us know what you thought about the webinar today to help us with our planning. And so, thanks again everyone we appreciate you being here.

Shana Jones:

Thank you, Stephanie. Bye guys.

Stephanie Otts:

Bye.