



Regional Food Supply



Regional Public Transportation



Community Energy



Interconnectivity of Trails and Open Space



Green Job Training/Regional Market

CLEAN AIR  COOL PLANET

Communicating Adaptation to the Public

Interim Focus Group Findings

- **6 Focus Groups: Las Vegas, Chicago, and Charleston**
- **February 2010**
- **No outright global warming deniers**
- **Impacts, Specific Messages, Terminology Testing**
- **Phase 2 in progress**

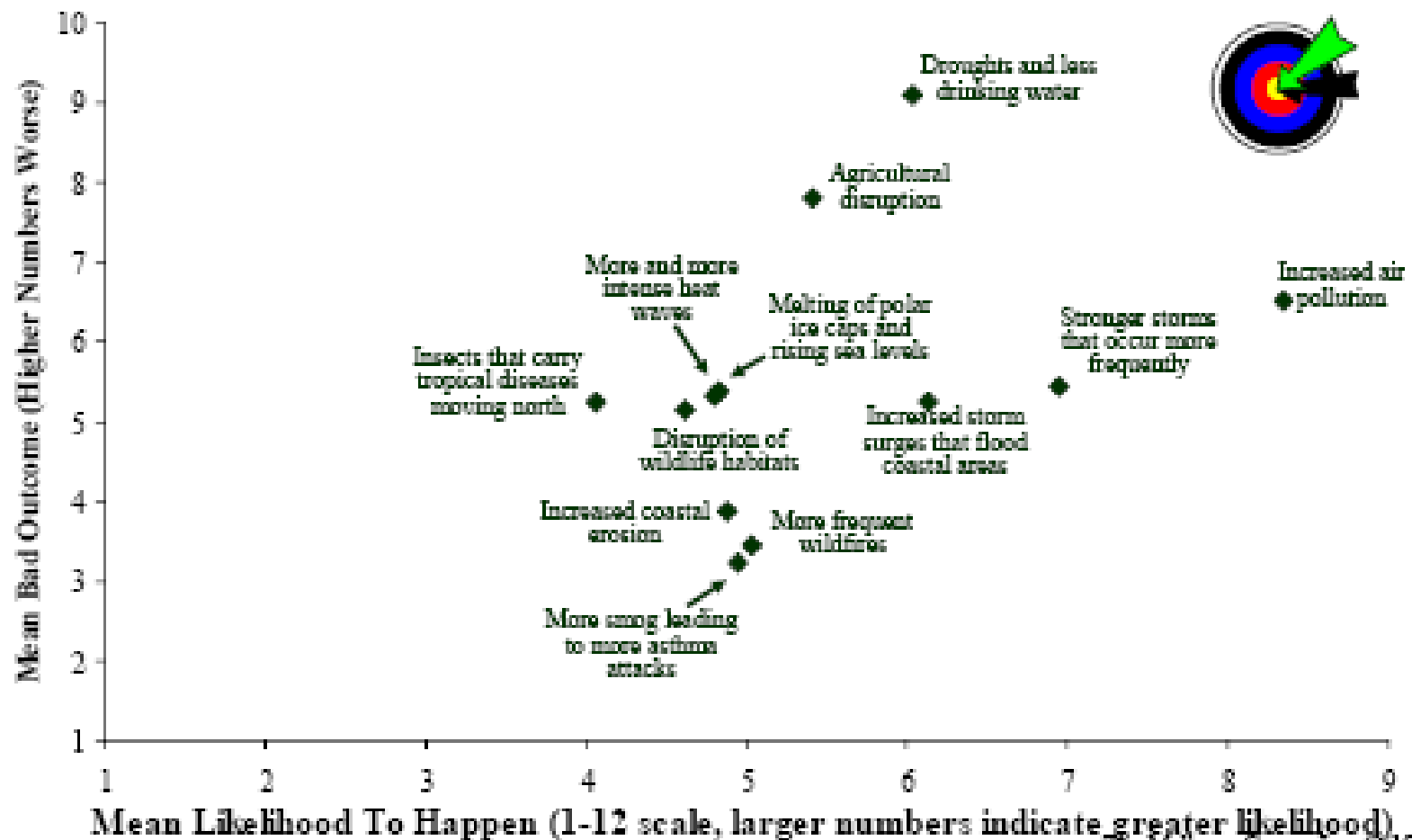
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Our Strategic Map Illustrates That Worse Outcomes Are Seen As More Likely To Occur

Strategic Map



Communicating Adaptation to the Public

IMPACTS

Likely Outcomes:

- Increased Air Pollution
- More Frequent Storms

Threats (Rated on how “bad” threat would be if actually occurred)

- Less Drinking Water
- Agricultural Disruptions that Harm Crops

Las Vegas, “You will die without drinking water”

Charleston, “Without food you can’t survive, it is just like water, you can’t survive”

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Communicating Adaptation to the Public

Specific Messages

Number One Effective Message

- Acknowledges Disagreement;
- Points toward common ground;
- Leaves question of anthropogenic vs. natural open;
- Concludes with benefits of energy independence and fighting generic pollution for children

“Some people disagree with the science behind global warming, but there are some things we can all agree upon, that whatever the ultimate cause, getting off our addiction of fossil fuels and gaining energy independence and securing a high quality of life for our children is something we can all agree on”

Communicating Adaptation to the Public

Terminology

- **“Mitigation strategies” simply not understood;**
- **“Climate Preparedness” best-received (active or proactive) followed by climate change readiness, climate change adaptation**



Scientific Term : Enhance

What is Means to the Public: **Improve, make better**

Instead Use: Intensify, increase

Scientific Term : Aerosol

What is Means to the Public: **A spray can**

Instead Use: Small particle

Scientific Term : Positive Trend

What is Means to the Public: **A good thing**

Instead Use: Upward trend

Scientific Term : Positive Feedback

What is Means to the Public: **A good thing**

Instead Use: Self-reinforcing Cycle

Scientific Term : Radiation

What is Means to the Public: **Cancer, x-ray**

Instead Use: Energy

Scientific Term : Theory

What is Means to the Public: **Opinion, speculation**

Instead Use: Scientific understanding

Scientific Term : Uncertainty

What is Means to the Public: **Might not happen**

Instead Use: Range of possibility

Scientific Term : Risk

What is Means to the Public: **Low probability**

Instead Use: Threat

Scientific Term : Scheme

What is Means to the Public: **Plot to deceive or harm**

Instead Use: Scenario or plan

Common Sustainable Thinking Blunders

- **Confirmation Bias**
Most people look for evidence that confirms existing beliefs and tend to reject contradictory information.
- **Misplaced Confidence**
It is easy to assume the future will be similar to the past, making it difficult to identify mistakes and alter behavior when conditions change.
- **Wishful Thinking**
We tend to believe favorable outcomes are more likely to happen than undesirable ones.
- **Belief Polarization**
Many choose to associate only with people who share their views.

Climate Communications and Behavior Change, Climate Leadership Initiative

Communicating Adaptation

“tension” (dissonance) between some deeply held goals or values and current condition.

For example: people must be sufficiently worried that global warming threatens their jobs, families, communities, or other things they deeply care about.

Taking personal action or supporting policies to address the issue becomes consistent with their values and helps to resolve the tension.

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Delivering the Message

Illustrate what it means for the climate to change



Choose the right messenger!



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Communicating Adaptation to the Public

Resources

[Engaging Chicago's Diverse Communities](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/ccuc/ccuc_sites/Climate_Action/climate_action.htm)

http://www.fieldmuseum.org/ccuc/ccuc_sites/Climate_Action/climate_action.htm

[Climate Communications and Behavior \(CLI University of Oregon\)](http://climlead.uoregon.edu/sites/climlead.uoregon.edu/files/reports/ClimCommBehaviorChangeGuide.pdf)

<http://climlead.uoregon.edu/sites/climlead.uoregon.edu/files/reports/ClimCommBehaviorChangeGuide.pdf>

[Pew Center](http://www.pewclimate.org/communicating)

<http://www.pewclimate.org/communicating>

[Yale Project on Climate Change and Communication](http://environment.yale.edu/climate/)

<http://environment.yale.edu/climate/>

Communicating Adaptation to the Public

Needs Assessment

Resources: Funding, trained staff

Bureaucratic Barriers: Need mandate, Unclear roles and responsibilities, Authority spread among agencies, Lack of guidance, Federal (likely also state) policies/regulations/statutes hinder efforts

Data Needs: Information on future impacts, Climate data on local/regional scale, Data on future tipping point (when would it happen), Baseline data, Cost/benefit information (especially current costs v. future (uncertain) benefits), Local/regional vulnerability assessments

Other Needs: Workshops, “No regrets” actions, Public education, Training, Help with making adaptation a priority, ID and sharing of best practices

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