



Making Important Contributions to Community Resilience

The Consortium for Resilient Gulf Communities (CRGC)

explores how disasters affect residents and economies near the Gulf of Mexico. The consortium was established in 2015 to assess and address the public health, social, and economic impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This transdisciplinary research is having a broad impact on efforts to build community resilience.

We are



Generating new knowledge



Advancing research methods



Building community capacity and future leaders



Generating new knowledge

Disaster recovery takes a long time. Communities may need long-term, tailored support to regain their footing.

- Exposure is associated with positive screens for depression and anxiety years after the oil spill
- Worry about ongoing impacts, especially on health and household finances, persists
- Fear of future disasters is higher among people (especially women) exposed to multiple disasters
- Trauma exposure may be a better indicator of long-term behavioral health risk than oil spill exposure among disaster-weary Gulf Coast residents
- Disaster survivors who are not particularly religious but live in very religious areas face a higher risk of problem drinking

Some groups are less resilient than others, according to our economic analyses and surveys. Policymakers and NGOs could target these groups in preparedness and recovery efforts.

- Fishing households with larger social networks are uniquely susceptible to depression in the long term after a disaster—suggesting a new mechanism that contributes to vulnerability
- Impacts on the tourism industry can differ by sector
- Residents who are older or more educated tend to show greater resilience; black and Vietnamese residents appear less resilient than white residents
- Marine life and the fishing industry were negatively affected in the short run—largely because commercial fishing operations stopped temporarily in the spill area; the effects on marine life were species-specific

Advancing Research Methods



Established a probabilistic, longitudinal panel of 2,520 coastal residents in the Gulf States

- Instrument and user guide publicly available for the Survey of Trauma, Resilience, and Opportunity Among Neighborhoods in the Gulf (STRONG) study
- Provides baseline measures of health, social, and economic functioning and perceptions of risk against which post-disaster functioning can be measured (e.g., STRONG II surveyed the same sample of Hurricane Harvey victims as STRONG I)
- Permits investigation of cumulative impacts of future disasters in the Gulf region



Developed an innovative “complex adaptive systems” approach to assessing and addressing community resilience

- Provides a rationale for achieving resilience by addressing the dynamic social context of a disaster
- Underscores the importance of being inclusive, clarifying interdependencies, and making course corrections through iterative processes



“Use-inspired” approach to community resilience research resulted in products that quickly and directly addressed stakeholder needs

- Searchable database of projects on human impacts of the oil spill that allows lay people to understand the various research efforts underway
- Searchable database of literature on oil spills and public health
- Searchable database of sources of information on fisheries, tourism, and oil spill claims
- Searchable database of disaster survey literature



Deepened community-researcher partnerships

- Partnering with community organizations in data collection and dissemination can result in critical feedback that helps to improve community-based resilience research



Developed new datasets, freely and publicly available at Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Information and Data Cooperative (GRIIDC)

- STRONG I survey
- In-person disaster preparedness and resilience survey
- Compilation of Louisiana commercial fisheries landings 1999–2015
- Compilation of NOAA commercial fisheries landings 1994–2014
- More to come!



Building Community Capacity and Future Community Leaders



Trained community members from diverse sectors in resilience-building efforts

- 40 community members participated in extensive classroom and in-situ practical resilience training run by the University of South Alabama's Coastal Resource and Resiliency Center
- 27 community leaders participated in Leadership Forums implemented by Tulane University's Disaster Leadership Resilience Academy that included developing and critiquing proposals for resilience-building activities



Provided health and social services directly to vulnerable coastal residents

- Deployed 7 community health workers in community organizations and clinics in Alabama and Louisiana, who performed almost 7,000 services (May 2016–September 2017)



Trained students in transdisciplinary methods

- 44 graduate and undergraduate students primarily from Gulf region universities
- 2 students have been recognized as Gulf of Mexico Research Institute scholars and incorporated CRGC research into their dissertations
- Students are lead authors of published peer-reviewed journal articles; contribute to literature reviews; collect, manage, and analyze data; develop tools; train community members in best practices for resilience; and speak at conferences and workshops

Funded by



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Learn more

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