

Coastal Resilience Index: A Community Self-Assessment

Overview

The Coastal Resilience Index (CRI) is a self-assessment tool that coastal community leaders can use to examine if their community will reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning after a disaster. The tool was designed to allow local leaders to interactively discuss past or hypothetical storm events and evaluate how their critical facilities and infrastructure, businesses, and social systems will respond before, during, and after a storm of a similar or greater magnitude.

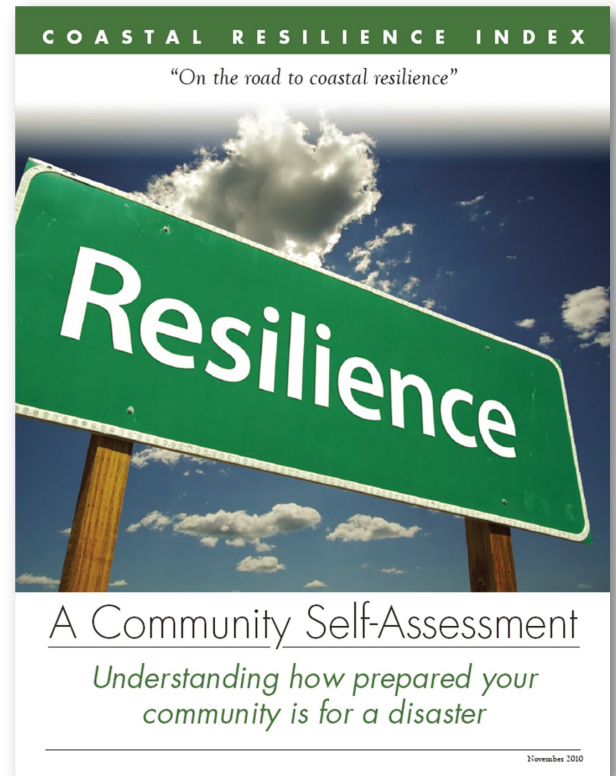
The CRI Objectives

The CRI is intended to help coastal communities to:

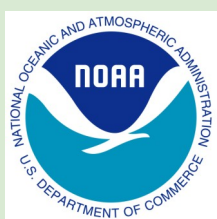
- **Explore** their risk and vulnerabilities using local experience and knowledge.
- **Evaluate** if and how their existing planning and mitigation efforts reduce the impact of coastal storms.
- **Understand** local response and recovery mechanisms, including business and volunteer lead efforts.
- **Identify** areas in which they can become more resilient.

The Process

A trained facilitator from a local Sea Grant Extension Office, University Cooperative Extension, National Estuarine Research Reserve, or other locally respected organization should lead the CRI process during one or a series of meetings. Participation should include experienced local planners, emergency managers, engineers, floodplain managers, administrators, and elected officials, in addition to business and community leaders. The diverse backgrounds and antidotal knowledge of the assessment participants, along with supporting resources—like historical records, planning documents, and flood maps, will stimulate dialogue among local professionals and comprehensively inform the completion of the index.



DEVELOPED AND PILOTED WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



For additional information, visit the Community Resilience Index webpage at www.masgc.org/ri/.

The assessment process will engage community leaders in identifying local vulnerabilities, along with practical solutions for improved resilience. The CRI consists mainly of 'yes' and 'no' questions and is designed to be completed within three hours, although the development of recommendations may require additional time. The result of the assessment is a Resilience Index, which will provide the community with a baseline score to gauge improvement during future assessments. While the Resilience Index and methodology does not replace the need for a detailed study, just as a self-examination for skin cancer is not a substitute for a check-up and tests by a dermatologist, the self-assessment can inform and encourage a community to seek further consultation. From there, community leaders can then determine where to allocate funding and resources to mitigate impacts of future disasters.



Community leaders completing the CRI in Sarasota, FL.

Where has the Coastal Resilience Index been applied?

The CRI was developed as part of the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Storms Program for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance through partner organizations, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Louisiana Sea Grant, and NOAA. While the tool was designed for application along the Gulf Coast, it can be adapted to address varying types of

hazards and be altered to be used in other coastal areas of the country. From Texas to Florida, communities across the Gulf Coast have already completed the Community Resilience Index and are undertaking measures to improve their resilience to future storms.

Application of the CRI continues to grow as additional facilitators are trained to administer the tool. The facilitator training workshops have been organized by Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant with the support of the Environmental Protection Agency. To date, over 70 education, outreach, and extension professionals in the Gulf, Georgia, North and South Carolina have been trained to facilitate the self-assessment tool.



Outreach and extension specialists participate in a CRI facilitator training workshop in Biloxi, MS.

Participating Communities:

- Bayou La Batre, AL
- Dauphin Island, AL
- Foley, AL
- Gulf Shores, AL
- Magnolia Springs, AL
- Orange Beach, AL
- Carrabelle, FL
- Cedar Key, FL
- Fort Myers Beach, FL
- Franklin County, FL
- Marco Island, FL
- Perdido Beach, FL
- Santa Rosa County, FL
- Sarasota, FL
- Steinhatchee, FL
- Calcasieu Parish, LA
- Cameron Parish, LA
- Iowa, LA
- Mandeville, LA
- Lafourche Parish, LA
- Terrabone Parish, LA
- Orleans Parish, LA
- Plaquemines Parish, LA
- St. James Parish, LA
- St. Tammany Parish, LA
- Slidell, LA
- Biloxi, MS
- Ocean Springs, MS
- Pascagoula, MS
- Pass Christian, MS
- Aransas County, TX
- Ingleside, TX
- Port Aransas, TX
- Port Arthur, TX

For additional information on the Community Resilience Index, contact Jody Thompson, CRI Regional Outreach Coordinator, Auburn University/Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium at jody.thompson@auburn.edu or 251/438-5690