

Capitol Hill Oceans Week in review

On June 4-6, 2013, marine professionals, government officials, and ocean enthusiasts from across the country converged on Washington, D.C., for a three-day conversation about ocean and coastal policy.

The first day's discussion focused on improving natural disaster response and preparedness in coastal communities. Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy called attention to a report that will be released by the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force this August, which will provide comprehensive recommendations for improving federal disaster response. Braxton Davis, director of the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, emphasized the value of federal-state partnerships in addressing coastal hazards, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Sea Grant program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Dr. Kathryn Sullivan highlighted tools that make data accessible to decision-makers and the public, including NOAA's Digital Coast, the Natural Capital Project's InVEST, the White House's Open Data Initiatives project, and the National Ocean Council's data portal. Sullivan's experience as an astronaut gave her a uniquely intuitive understanding of the importance of the world's oceans. "With their very first glimpse out the window of a spacecraft, every single astronaut grasps a profound truth ...that we are citizens of an ocean planet," she reflected.

Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, speaking at Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2013.
