

# Climate Change Education Partnership



Greg Knealle/USFWS

Sea level rise is affecting salt marshes and beaches at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, VA.

The National Science Foundation awarded nearly \$1 million to a team to devise ways to better inform visitors to national parks and wildlife refuges about climate change. The team, led by Colorado State University, includes the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Partnering with the national parks and wildlife refuges creates a unique opportunity to use place-based learning to educate a diverse audience about the impacts of climate change,” says Jessica Thompson, project leader and assistant professor at Colorado State University. “Hopefully, visitors will begin to understand how

climate change is impacting America’s greatest treasures and be motivated to make choices to live more sustainably.” The team seeks to reach urban populations, tribal members, minorities and ethnic populations.

### Getting the Message Across

So far the team has held workshops in Florida, Washington, D.C., Colorado and Alaska. Each workshop included community groups, park or refuge staff, Friends and

other interested parties. There were discussions and surveys about such questions as current and future climate change impacts in the area—shrinking glaciers, changes in fishing and other wildlife-dependent recreation, changing species composition and phenology, including questions like, are trees blooming earlier. There were small group discussions about target audiences—teachers, young people,

policy makers—target messages and innovative ways to communicate the message. Reports from each workshop are available online at <https://sites.google.com/site/ccedpartner/>.

The ultimate goal is to integrate climate science with park and refuge interpretive and educational programming. As the partnership acquires additional funding, there are plans to develop interpretive signs, brochures and social media messages to help parks and refuges deliver climate changes messages. Friends will be able to help develop and use place-based education plans to engage visitors in hands-on climate change education. 

Check the Calendar online at [www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/calendar.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/calendar.html).

## FriendsForward

Address editorial inquiries about this issue to:

Karen Leggett  
USFWS-NWRS  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 632  
Arlington, VA 22203  
703-358-2375  
Karen\_Leggett@fws.gov

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.*



Follow the National Wildlife Refuge System

Twitter @USFWSRefuges  
Facebook [www.facebook.com/usfwsrefuges](http://www.facebook.com/usfwsrefuges)  
[www.fws.gov/refuges](http://www.fws.gov/refuges)

