

Inundated: Holistically Improving Institutional Coordination and Crisis Management Following Superstorm Sandy

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This paper and presentation analyzes institutional coordination and crisis management efforts surrounding Superstorm Sandy in the New York Metropolitan Area. It argues that response and recovery efforts were inconsistent, and at times ineffective, due to the lack of utilizing a holistic and systems thinking approach. Using the Rockaway Peninsula as a fractal exemplar of the region, this document identifies ways to improve preparation, response and recovery in a resilient fashion through improving communication, establishing trust, overcoming cognitive biases, creating a greater linkage between disaster planning and emergency management, and leveraging tools such as risk analysis and needs assessments. Through institutional coordination, crisis management and organizational dynamics research; stakeholder interviews with those involved with response and recovery efforts; and comparative analysis with regional, national and international examples, it develops a set of recommendations for holistic preparation and response in a disaster event, while considering the complex political and geographic structure of the region.