

# community adaptation learning exchange

## Annual Report

June 2021

Since its formation in early 2020, the Community Adaptation Learning Exchange (CALE) has grown from an idea to convene virtual conversations about adaptation practice into a platform of nearly 200 members from across the United States. In its first year, CALE successfully organized six sessions around a single theme in which invited experts shared and discussed their work with members. The session topics ranged from neighborhood studies, to municipal planning, to regional and statewide initiatives. In addition, CALE launched a website and established a social media presence, with the goals of expanding outreach and access as well as creating a publicly-accessible archive and resource for practitioners and communities.

This first annual report documents CALE's growth and summarizes the past year's activities. CALE is grateful for the engagement of its members and speakers, and especially the American Society of Adaptation Professionals, which has provided organizational guidance and logistical support.

### **Mission & Program**

The Community Adaptation Learning Exchange is a peer-learning collective focused on advancing climate adaptation efforts at the community level. The CALE network supports and builds the capacity of its members through the thoughtful interrogation of adaptation practice and planning rooted in equity and climate justice.

CALE convened bi-monthly meetings focused on elevating the experience and perspectives of individuals working to advance community planning for climate change. The Exchange sought to learn from both successes and failures of efforts to support sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities.

### **Membership**

As of May 2021, CALE comprised 185 members from across the United States, representing a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. Members come from the following backgrounds: 32% Private sector, 31% Government, 21% Research & Academia, 14% Nonprofit / NGO, 2% Public-Private Partnerships.

### **2020-2021 Theme: Identifying and Understanding Community Climate Risks and Vulnerabilities**

CALE's programming theme was learning how communities across the U.S. identify and understand climate risks, hazards, and vulnerabilities. The sessions focused on exploring adaptation topics and projects through a set of unifying questions and considerations, asking all invited speakers to unpack underlying assumptions, to elaborate goals and priorities, to address the role of racial equity and inclusion, and to revisit failures and opportunities for improvement.

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**Year 1 Sessions** - all available via CALE's [website](#) and [YouTube playlist](#)

## *Adapting to Rising Tides: Bay Area*

May 21, 2021 | Dana Brechwald, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission  
CALE's inaugural session featured a presentation about BCDC's nationally-recognized and groundbreaking Adapting to Rising Tides program (ART). Dana presented the findings of the program's comprehensive Bay Area vulnerability assessment and shared how ART is helping shoreline communities plan for sea-level rise and other climate impacts.

## *Equitable & Community-Driven Approaches to Address Urban Heat Risk*

August 6, 2020 | Cheyenne Flores, Philadelphia Office of Sustainability  
The session discussed risks and vulnerabilities related to extreme heat with a presentation on the City of Philadelphia's first ever community heat relief plan, Beat the Heat/ Venza el Calor. Beat the Heat focuses on one of Philadelphia's hottest and most heat-vulnerable neighborhoods, Hunting Park. This initiative identified the causes for disparate and inequitable heat impacts and supported community-driven decision-making and implementation of heat resilience measures.

## *Land + Water WORKS: Creating a Resilient Detroit Using Green Stormwater Infrastructure*

October 15, 2020 | Nicole Brown & Susan Rusinowski, Detroit Future City  
The session explored how the community-based initiative Land + Water WORKS is working to address climate change, combat underinvestment in stormwater management infrastructure, and overcome decades of disinvestment in communities of color through community education and the creation of climate-adaptive green infrastructure opportunities in Detroit.

## *Living with Extreme Storms: Risk, Resilience, and Power*

December 17, 2020 | Aron Chang, Water Leaders Institute / Civic Studio  
At the conclusion of a record-breaking 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, we reflected on how the understanding of "problems" narrows or predicts the types of "solutions" we can imagine, and how planning often operates within political constraints, whether recognized or not. This session unpacked the range of meanings of "understanding risk" when we talk about extreme storms and consider how we can develop a shared language as the basis for any response. We interrogated the power dynamics that shape the implementation of post-disaster projects and discussed how to shift that power toward frontline communities.

## *Tribal Drought Adaptation: Using the Climate Dashboard for Planning & Decision-Making*

February 25, 2021 | Mark Junker, Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri & Crystal Stiles, High Plains Regional Climate Center & UNL School of Natural Resources  
Climate change is water change. Nowhere in the U.S. is this more present than in Southwestern and High Plains communities who have been living through periods of unprecedented extreme weather in recent decades. This session explored the extreme weather and drought conditions faced by the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri and discussed how the Sac and Fox Nation as well as other Tribal communities are using a drought monitoring and decision-making dashboard to provide actionable and locally- relevant climate information.

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## *Fire-Adapted Planning: Approaches to Recovery and Resilience from California*

April 22, 2021 | Erik de Kok, California Governor's Office of Planning and Research & Tennis Wick, Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Department

While wildfire is a natural part of many landscapes, land use practices, fire suppression tactics, climate change, and other factors have combined to create an environment where devastating fires are growing common. This session brought together leaders from local and state-level efforts to advance wildfire recovery and adaptation. We learned about innovative statewide wildfire adaptation planning initiatives and explored recovery and rebuilding efforts in Sonoma County after devastating recent wildfires which includes laying the groundwork for adaptation to a future of increased fire risk.

### **Strategic Planning**

During April 2021 the CALE management team organized a virtual retreat to reflect on CALE's first year and discuss future initiatives. The team agreed on the priority to strengthen CALE's exchange element while continuing to reinforce its core values as an inclusive network and a practical, solutions-oriented resource for professionals and citizens interested in and working on community-based climate adaptation work. Outcomes of the retreat included developing the goals and format of the member survey and establishing the 2021-2022 annual theme: "climate communications."

### **Member Survey**

CALE conducted a member survey in May 2021 to assess the strengths of our programming and gain insights to inform future growth. Members valued the peer-learning experience and found the presentations insightful, providing valuable adaptation planning information. They indicated that CALE session information was relevant to their work, their challenges, and directed them to practical solutions in adaptation planning. Desired areas of growth include strengthening member interactions, such as through small group discussions and networking opportunities.

### **Multi-platform Engagement**

Alongside its programming, CALE launched a website and presence on social media. The website contains information on current programming as well as an archive and record of past events. CALE's social media presence offers a way to engage its membership across platforms and reach new audiences beyond the existing ASAP network. Join CALE on: Instagram (@community\_adaptation), Twitter (@communityadapt), and LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/company/community-adaptation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/community-adaptation)).

### **Management Team**

CALE's 2020-2021 management team guided its programming and strategic planning: Justine Shapiro-Kline (co-founder), Sebastian Malter (co-founder), Emily Alvarez, Emma Cutler, Miles Gordon, Emily Korman, and Rose Newberry.