



MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Rachel Pass
805-772-3834 ext. 13
rpass@mbnep.org

Morro Bay Science Explorations: Climate Change and Rising Seas on the Central Coast

We have all heard the story of climate change. As the global average temperature rises, the polar icecaps continue to melt and sea level continues to rise, encroaching on beaches and inundating roads and other infrastructure. What does this mean for us on the Central Coast of California? How will our beaches, our well-preserved coastal habitats, our wildlife, and our communities fare? How do we prepare for the changes and challenges ahead?

Expert speakers will delve into these questions in **Morro Bay Science Explorations: Climate Change and Rising Seas, hosted by the Estuary Program. This free evening of short, science-focused talks takes place on Thursday, February 8, at 6 p.m. at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens.**

Come explore these scientific concepts and engage in the conversation with experts from across the state. **Joanna Wu of Audubon California** will discuss the effects of climate change on bird populations. **Dr. Karen Thorne of USGS** will present the results of her study of California coast tidal marshes and the projected impacts of sea level rise on these valuable habitats. **Dr. Michael R. Boswell of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo** will speak about mitigation and management of sea level rise locally and across the state.

Joanna Wu has been a biologist at National Audubon Society for the past year, and lives and works in San Francisco. She obtained her masters from the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, studying the endemic thrush 'Ōma'ō. She then returned to the San Francisco Bay Area and worked for the Point Reyes-based non-profit, the Institute for Bird Populations, as a biologist specializing in song birds and owls of the Sierra Nevada, before embarking on climate-related projects at Audubon.

Dr. Karen Thorne is a Principal Investigator with the USGS Western Ecological Research Center, where her focus is in climate-related research that assesses impacts to coastal ecosystems. Her current focus is examining how sea-level rise and storms impact California salt

marsh ecosystems and wildlife. Her research is based on field data collection methods that can be developed into climate change impact models to inform management decisions.

Dr. Michael R. Boswell is the Department Head of Cal Poly's City & Regional Planning Department.

He is a recognized expert in climate adaptation planning and policy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Dr. Boswell's publications cover a range of topics including climate action planning, hazard mitigation, and sustainable development. He has a Master of Science (M.S.P.) and Ph.D. in Urban & Regional Planning from Florida State University. Dr. Boswell currently serves as an expert advisor on "Guiding Principles for City Climate Action Planning" through the United Nation's UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative.

For more details on the Science Explorations: Climate Change and Rising Seas event, please visit www.mbnep.org/events.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program brings together citizens, local governments, other nonprofits, agencies, and landowners to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary. The Estuary Program has been conducting monitoring and research, restoring natural habitats, and educating residents and visitors on how to keep Morro Bay clean and healthy since 1995.