

Presenter: Whitney Gray [11:15 to Noon]

Presentation Title: State Update: DEP's Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection

Abstract: Following Governor DeSantis' Executive Order, the Florida Coastal Office is now the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, putting greater emphasis on DEP's ongoing efforts to help coastal communities deal with the effects of sea level rise, including coastal flooding, erosion, and ecosystem changes. This session will offer an update on relevant climate science, and on the recent activities of the Florida Resilient Coastlines Program (FRCP): technical resources, funding, and coordination.

Whitney Gray

Whitney Gray has been the Administrator of the Florida Resilient Coastlines Program in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection of DEP since December 2017. Her bachelor's and master's degrees are from the University of Florida where she studied zoology and systems ecology. She first worked on climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning with the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. From 2012 to 2015, Whitney served as Sea Level Rise Coordinator for both FWC and Florida Sea Grant, specializing in the effects of sea level rise on coastal ecosystems. She coordinated an internal climate change seminar series ("Florida Adapts") and served as a subject-matter expert on Species Action Plans during the Imperiled Species Management Planning process. Originally from Florida's Gulf Coast, Whitney has seen first-hand how sea level rise has changed the state, from critical erosion to "ghost forests." Her task now is to bring sea level rise resilience planning to the forefront of DEP activity for the long-term benefit of the people and ecosystems of Florida.