



North Carolina

Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan

Impacts, Vulnerability, Risks, and Preliminary Actions

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms

June 2020

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Adaptation	The process of adjusting to new (climate) conditions in order to reduce risks to valued assets.
Adaptive capacity	The ability of a person, asset, or system to adjust to a hazard, take advantage of new opportunities, or cope with change.
Assets	People, resources, ecosystems, infrastructure, and the services they provide. Assets are the tangible and intangible things people or communities value.
Biodiversity	A measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem levels.
Biomimicry	The design and production of materials, structures, and systems that are modeled on biological entities and processes; Biomimetics is the field of science in which inspirations are elicited from nature to design practical materials and systems that can imitate structure and function of native biological systems
Carbon Sequestration	A process by which atmospheric carbon dioxide is taken up by trees, grasses, and other plants through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in biomass (trunks, branches, foliage, and roots) and soils.
Climate Justice	Ensuring that the people and communities who are least culpable in the warming of the planet, and most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, do not suffer disproportionately as a result of historical injustice and disinvestment
Climate stressor	A condition, event, or trend related to climate variability and change that can exacerbate hazards.
Community Resilience	The capacity of a community or business to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption.
Compounding Vulnerabilities	Compounding social and demographic factors that increase a residents' vulnerability to climate exposures and negative health outcomes.
Consequence	A subsequent result (usually negative) that follows from damage to or loss of an asset. Quantifying potential consequences is an important part of determining risk.
Ecosystem Resilience	The capacity of the natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption.

Ecosystem services	Benefits that humans receive from natural systems such as pollination, water filtration, and carbon sequestration
Equity	Fair access to livelihood, education and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs
Estuarine	Pertaining to an estuary, or a partially enclosed coastal body of brackish water with one or more rivers or streams flowing into it, and with a free connection to the open sea.
Exposure	The presence of people, assets, and ecosystems in places where they could be adversely affected by hazards.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	A gas that traps heat in the atmosphere by absorbing infrared radiation and contributes to the greenhouse effect including carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF ₆).
Greenway	A strip of undeveloped land near an urban area, set aside for recreational use or environmental protection.
Hazard	An event or condition that may cause injury, illness, or death to people or damage to assets.
Impacts	Effects on natural and human systems that result from hazards. Evaluating potential impacts is a critical step in assessing vulnerability.
Local Capacity	The potential of a smaller scale geographic area, group, tribe, or small scale system to adjust to change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, take advantage of opportunities, and cope with consequences at the defined smaller scale
Mariculture	Mariculture is a broad term that encompasses the cultivation of a wide variety of species of aquatic organisms, including both plants and animals.
Microgrid	A microgrid is a local energy grid with control capability, which means it can disconnect from the traditional grid and operate autonomously.
Mitigation	Processes that can reduce the amount and speed of future climate change by reducing emissions of heat-trapping gases or removing them from the atmosphere.
Natural and Working Lands	Lands that are managed for natural purposes, to support food and fiber production, and for human communities. Examples include public and private forests, cropland, pastureland, grassland, wetlands, salt marsh, recreational areas, and “development lands”, which refer to natural and managed lands within urban and rural communities

Non-climate stressor	A change or trend unrelated to climate that can exacerbate hazards.
Pocosins	Peatland pocosins are saturated wetlands of Coastal Plain flats, swales, and Carolina bays, with organic matter accumulation, and with distinctive vegetation characterized by Pond Pine (<i>Pinus serotina</i>) and a other dense evergreen shrub species.
Probability	The likelihood of hazard events occurring. Probabilities have traditionally been determined from the historic frequency of events. With changing climate and the introduction of non-climate stressors, the probability of hazard events also changes.
Projections	Potential future climate conditions calculated by computer-based models of the Earth system. Projections are based on sets of assumptions about the future (scenarios) that may or may not be realized.
Regenerative	The process of renewal, restoration, and growth that makes genomes, cells, organisms, and ecosystems resilient to natural fluctuations or events that cause disturbance or damage.
Regenerative (Agriculture)	Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that seeks to rehabilitate and enhance the entire ecosystem of the farm by placing a heavy premium on soil health with attention also paid to water management, fertilizer use, and more. It is a method of farming that “improves the resources it uses, rather than destroying or depleting them.
Resilience	The capacity of individuals, a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption.
Risk	The potential total cost if something of value is damaged or lost, <u>considered together with the likelihood</u> of that loss occurring. Risk is often evaluated as the probability of a hazard occurring multiplied by the consequence that would result if it did happen.
Sensitivity	The degree to which a system, population, or resource is or might be affected by hazards.
Social Vulnerability	Refers to the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks.
Stakeholder	Decision makers who would be involved in assessing vulnerability and/or implementing adaptation strategies

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)	Estuarine or marine habitat characterized by the presence of vascular plants that are rooted in the ground and remain under the surface of the water during all tidal stages, also referred to as seagrass or underwater grass.
Tree Canopy	The layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that provide tree coverage of the ground when viewed from above.
Uncertainty	A state of incomplete knowledge. Uncertainty about future climate arises from the complexity of the climate system and the ability of models to represent it, as well as the inability to predict the decisions that society will make.
Vulnerability	The propensity or predisposition of assets to be adversely affected by hazards. Vulnerability encompasses exposure, sensitivity, potential impacts, and adaptive capacity.
Vulnerable Communities	Urban and rural populations that are threatened by extreme weather events, such as flooding and wildfire, or long-term ecosystem changes, such as saltwater intrusion or coastal erosion
Watershed	Area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the outflow of a reservoir, mouth of a bay, or any point along a stream channel.



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