



RENEE COLLINI, PH.D.

*Director of the Community Resilience Center
at The Water Institute*

ORGANIZATION ROLE

Director, Community
Resilience Center at
The Water Institute

EDUCATION

Ph.D. research focus:
human sciences,
Mississippi State
University, 2022

MS Marine Sciences,
University of South
Alabama, 2012

BS Biology, University
of Texas at Dallas,
2008

NOTABLE BOARDS & COMMITTEES

NASA Sea Level
Change Team
Practitioner Advisory
Board

National Climate
Assessment Five
Coastal Effects
Chapter

Advisor to the U.S.
Sea Level Rise Task
Force

National Sea Grant
Climate and Weather
Team

NOAA SLR Resilience
Working Group

Renee Collini, Ph.D., Director of the Community Resilience Center at The Water Institute (Center), brings years of experience in providing tools and support to federal, state, and local entities pursuing adaptation and resilience strategies. Renee draws from on-the-ground experience working in underserved communities and navigating federal, state, and local governmental processes and systems to help support effective and equitable climate resilience planning and action in communities across the Gulf Coast. With seed funding from NOAA, the Center began its mission in January 2023 and since then has been working with residents, community-based organizations, and local governments to enhance participation in and ability to pursue proactive and inclusive planning; leading a series of projects tackling different aspects of flood insurance premiums, including parametric insurance pilots in coastal Louisiana; and helping municipal staff understand and meet the growing demands from federal funders to address Justice 40 and other aspects of equity.

Prior to joining The Water Institute, Renee served as a coastal climate resilience specialist with Mississippi State University and Sea Grant for almost a decade, facilitating the flow of information between researchers and decision makers to improve science application. As the lead of the Program for Local Adaptation to Climate Effects: Sea-Level Rise, she integrated a multi-state network of stakeholders, researchers, NGOs, and state and federal agencies to build tools, programs, and projects to address gaps in sea-level rise observing, research, and decision-making. She has collaborated on projects and efforts that have improved coastal community and environmental resilience and has led development of tools and programming that have been applied across the United States. Collini is a recognized leader in resilience is serving as an author on the Fifth National Climate Assessment Coastal Effects Chapter.

Collini received her bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Texas at Dallas, master's degree in marine sciences from the University of South Alabama and her Ph.D. from Mississippi State University was focused on human sciences.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023–Present: Director, Gulf Center for Equitable Climate Resilience, The Water Institute

2014–2023: Program Director, Program for Local Adaptation to Climate Effects: Sea-Level Rise; formerly Northern Gulf of Mexico Sentinel Site Cooperative

2022–2023: Assistant Extension Professor of Climate Resilience, Mississippi State University



2014–2023: Coastal Climate Resilience Specialist, Sea Grant

2020–2023: Extension Instructor, Mississippi State University

2018–2019: Extension Associate III, Mississippi State University

2014–2018: Program Manager Alabama Real-time Coastal Observing System, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

2015–2017: Science Coordinator/DISL Liaison, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program

2012–2014: Marine Technician, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

SELECTED PROJECTS

Advancing Coastal Resilience Through Public-Private Partnership. *Seaside Institute (Ongoing).* Lead. The project seeks to explore mechanisms for productive public-private partnership, discuss challenges, and build upon existing plans and implementation strategies by convening experts, residents, county officials, local non-profits, and other interested parties. The work's focus is on relationship building, synthesis of existing knowledge and efforts, and scoping out short- and mid-term needs to advance long-term, resilience through coordinated public-private cooperation.

Citywide Resilience Assessment and Plan. *City of Mobile, AL (Ongoing).* Climate Communication Specialist. The Resilience Assessment establishes a baseline understanding of the resilience of Mobile's communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to chronic stressors and acute shocks the city faces today and into the future. Mobile's Citywide Resilience Plan will investigate options and identify actionable steps the city can take to withstand, adapt, and thrive in the face of future challenges so that Mobile remains a great place to live, work and raise a family for generations to come. The plan will serve as the roadmap with which to build the city's resilience and will include details about timelines, partners, funding, and other mechanisms to support implementation.

Sea-Level Rise Education in North Gulfport.

Contributor (Ongoing). Technical Lead. Working with the local grassroots organization EEECHO, Collini is supporting efforts to address flooding issues, identify priority projects, and securing funding to implement priority projects.

Resilient East Biloxi. *Biloxi, MS (Ongoing).* Co-Founder.

In partnership with the Steps Coalition, PLACE:SLR, and local non-profits, Collini supports an ongoing program to enhance an area of Biloxi still rebuilding post-Katrina. Community leaders participate in training and capacity building to enable community-led, resilient redevelopment. There has already been an order of magnitude increase in community participation in rebuilding discussions and resilience education compared with previous efforts.

Technical Support for Coastal Communities in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. *Coastal Mississippi, Alabama, Florida Panhandle (Ongoing).* Lead.

Collini provides support to coastal municipalities, natural resource managers, and other stakeholders on how to integrate SLR into planning. This has included scoping infrastructure projects, designing and implementing vulnerability analyses, and facilitating preliminary dialogues within and across departments. Collini's support includes an in-depth understanding of expected amounts of SLR over multiple timescales, translation of SLR to biogeophysical and social impacts, decision-making approaches for an uncertain future, and frameworks and strategies for near and long-term planning. Collini works directly with community officials to determine their specific needs and how the available science and information can be tailored to inform their efforts moving forward.

Proactive Stormwater Feasibility Assessment.

In collaboration with Mississippi State University, PLACE:SLR, the City of Ocean Springs, and Jackson County, Mississippi, Collini is exploring the feasibility of using nature or natural features to alleviate flooding through reduced stormwater runoff and increased capacity for existing and new stormwater systems. The feasibility assessment will be informed through biological and physical data, as well as community and municipal stakeholder input. Funded by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Math Gulf Research Program.