

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING COMMUNITY HERITAGE VALUES IN A DISASTER

Tip #1: Relate to your Audience

Determine from your audience the places and experiences most important to them; does heritage play a role? What do they envision for their community in 10, 20, or 50 years? Again, it's about the community's beliefs and values, so start the conversation by discussing what matters the most to them.

Tip #2: Avoid Jargon

Speak plainly and limit discussions on technical topics. Share with the audience what is most at risk from disasters- their homes, their businesses, their cherished spaces, their community identity. Importantly, don't lead with data. Showing disaster statistics and sea-level rise charts and graphs isn't a compelling introduction to the message of heritage-based disaster resilience.

Tip #3: Tell Stories

Charts aren't compelling, but stories of personal experience are, so be prepared with those stories. Better yet, if possible have those individuals personally share their stories. Sharing disaster resilience and recovery stories allows people to make the emotional connections so important to believe that disaster risks to their community's heritage are real.

Tip #4: Answer Questions Honestly

When you don't have all the answers to the questions, admit it and follow up. While you may have prepared with facts, information, and compelling stories, you'll never have all the answers to the community's questions. Take those opportunities to learn from your community members and decision-makers what's important to them and use it as a reason to conduct follow-up, whether one-on-one or through another public event.