

Press release

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**CHALLENGES FACING COASTAL COMMUNITIES FEELING THE EFFECTS OF  
CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Rimouski, December 10th, 2010** – Community University Research Alliance - Challenges Facing Coastal Communities of the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence at a Time of Climate Change would like to wish to express its support for the communities and people affected by December 6, storm.

"It is a pity to see that it requires extreme events and a crisis to raise several territorial development issues relating to the effects of climate change and human occupation of riparian and coastal zones," noted researcher Professor Steve Plante of the Université du Québec à Rimouski, Department of Territorial Development. Despite the magnitude of the situation and urgency of the measures to be undertaken, this is an opportunity to encourage greater involvement of citizens, local organizations and municipalities with political bodies in how to prevent and manage risk in coastal areas, all in a long-term perspective and not only in terms of reacting to situations.

Indeed, the speed with which transformations induced by change effect both coasts and policy issues related to the management of the coastal zone call for the development of collective (municipalities, regions, associations, professional organizations) and individual (citizens) innovations in management and adaptation strategies. According to Steve Plante is in this spirit that we should seek to strengthen the adjustment capacity of citizens and municipalities in the context of sustainability of communities in vulnerable but essential coastal ecosystems. Recent events raise many "complexities and uncertainties about environmental phenomena and social systems that require keep development stakeholders to take into account "expert" knowledge alongside local knowledge if we are to overcome the challenges posed by the effects of climate change and coastal risks" says Steve Plante.

The integration of knowledge, skills and techniques that already exist can help define levels of vulnerability of communities and ecosystems. This will increase their resilience and their influence in the mechanisms of decision-making before, during and after events. Sharing of experiences, knowledge and expertise of various backgrounds would fill a lack of human and material resources which increases the vulnerability of communities. Development and accompaniment of communities can help partners and municipalities in their thinking and inform their position on continually evolving issues.

The Coastal Communities Challenges - CURA is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and brings together researchers and local groups from Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to promote the development of integrated and participatory approaches to support coastal communities.

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SOURCE : Steve Plante Codirecteur Coastal Communities Challenges-CURA  
Professeur titulaire en sciences sociales du développement  
Université du Québec à Rimouski  
(418) 723-1986 poste 1456  
Courriel : [Steve\\_Plante@UQAR.ca](mailto:Steve_Plante@UQAR.ca)  
<http://www.coastalcommunitieschallenges.org/>