



KATYA WOWK, PH.D.

Social Scientist and Co-Production SME

Katya Wowk excels in using transdisciplinary approaches to strengthen community resilience to disasters and environmental change. With most of her work based in the Gulf of Mexico and Texas, she partners with communities on the frontlines of societal change to understand resilience at the hyper-local level, as well as the assets, barriers and tradeoffs that occur in advancing local visions and goals.

ORGANIZATION ROLE

Senior Social Scientist

PROJECT ROLE / FOCUS AREAS

Community resilience

Knowledge co-
production

Community
engagement

Disaster mitigation

Natural infrastructure

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Ocean &
Coastal Policy,
University of Delaware,
2011

MPA, Environmental
Science and Policy,
Columbia University,
2005

BS, Ecology, Central
Connecticut State
University, 2004

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Editorial Board
Springer Nature
Humanities & Social
Sciences

Previously, she served as Chair for Community Resilience at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI), Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (TAMUCC), where she led a diverse team focused on co-producing science needed to advance resilience at the local level, and cofounded the Texas Coastal Bend Regional Resilience Partnership, a formal association with the Coastal Bend Council of Governments focused on building local capacity to mitigate disaster risk across an eleven county region in South Texas. She also held the position of Director of the Texas OneGulf RESTORE Center of Excellence, where she and the team advanced co-produced science with five Texas state agencies. Prior to her positions with HRI, Katya served in senior positions at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), including in the Office of the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (NOAA Administrator). Katya holds a Ph.D. in International Coastal and Ocean Policy from the University of Delaware and an M.P.A. in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University. A proud Navy spouse, she and her family are based in Norfolk, VA.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023–Present: Senior Social Scientist, The Water Institute

2019–Present: Founder and Co-Lead, Regional Resilience Partnership

2015–2023: Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (2022–2023: Chair for Community Resilience; 2020–2023: Director of Texas OneGulf RESTORE Center of Excellence; 2015–2022: Senior Research Scientist; 2015–Present: Associate Member of Graduate Faculty)

2012–2015: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Headquarters (2014–2015: Senior Social Scientist (Consultant), Office of the Chief Economist; 2013–2014: Senior Policy Lead (Contractor), Office of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Conservation and Management; 2012–2013: Program Coordination Officer to NOAA Administrator (Contractor), National Ocean Service)

2010–2012: Deputy Director, NOAA Programs, Earth Resources Technology, Inc.

2008–2010: Policy Specialist (Contractor) and Sea Grant Fellow, National Marine Protected Areas Center, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration



SELECTED PROJECTS

Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan *Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (Ongoing)*. Co-lead stakeholder engagement methods development and implementation in an interdisciplinary team tasked with drafting the 2025 Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan in partnership with the state.

Improving Health Equity and Health Data Systems in Texas At-Risk Communities *National Academies of Sciences Gulf Research Program & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Ongoing)*. Lead transdisciplinary project to understand social determinants of health, climate change and health equity in Nueces County, TX, to better inform public and private health data systems and plans.

Planning for Economic Resilience and Hazards in Rural Texas Communities *Economic Development Administration (Ongoing)*. Lead community-based project to understand and advance economic resilience in the face of climate hazards in two small, rural Texas towns and counties, including through co-developing local economic resilience action plans.

Sea Level Rise Planning *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Ongoing)*. Lead co-production and coordination of the Management Transition Advisory Group for the Effects of Sea Level Rise 2021 project on Coastal Resilience: Living with Sea Level Rise in the Texas Coastal Bend, which focuses on improved modeling to assess the potential of natural and nature-based features to mitigate risk.

Geospatial Economic Resilient Development (GeoRED) *Economic Development Administration and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (2020–2023)*. Led interdisciplinary team to create the first geospatial platform for the Texas Coastal Bend, including seven counties and four tools tailored by and for local communities. The tools on Hazards Planning, Social Vulnerability, Economic Development and Environmental Resilience assist communities in co-developing smart growth practices with local data.

- Olander, L., K. Warnell, S. Mason, R. Karasik, H. Tallis, K. Coffey, C. Hale, C. Shepard, K. Wowk, D. Yoskowitz. Accepted for Publication. Measuring outcomes: Standardizing socioeconomic monitoring of Gulf Coast restoration. *Communications Earth and Environment*.
- Backer, L., A. Lavery, H. Solo-Gabriele, A. Schnall, V. Robers, M. Vigar, M. Gleason, S. Kieszak, J. Estenik, A. Reich, C. Court, K. Wowk, W. Blair Stephan, B. Kirkpatrick, V. Trainer, R. Stumpf, K. Coffey, R. Koeneke and R. Botta. 2023. Monitoring and measuring human health and well-being. In: *Oceans and Human Health: Opportunities and Impacts*, 2nd Ed., L. Fleming et al. Elsevier.
- Wowk, K., M. Adams & E. Martinez. 2023. Translating the Complexity of Disaster Resilience with Local Leaders. *Frontiers in Communication*. Vol. 8.
- McClure, M. L., & K. Wowk. 2022. COVID-19 Small Business Impacts in the Texas Coastal Bend: A Hyperlocal Approach for Small & Rural Communities. *Small Business Institute Journal*, Vol. 18(2).
- Dirani, K., J. Baldauf, Z. Medina-Cetina, K. Wowk, S. Herzka, R. Bello Bolio, V. Gutierrez Martinez, L. Alberto Munoz Ubando. 2021. Learning organization as a framework for networks' learning and collaboration. *The Learning Organization*, Vol. 28(4).
- Sandifer P., A. Ferguson, M. Finucane, M. Partyka, H. Solo-Gabriele, A. Hayward Walker, K. Wowk, R. Caffey, and D. Yoskowitz. 2021. Human Health and Socioeconomic Effects of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. *Oceanography*, Vol. 34:1.
- Wowk, K., L. McKinney, F. Muller-Karger, R. Moll, S. Avery, E. Escobar-Briones, D. Yoskowitz and R. McLaughlin. 2017. Evolving academic culture to meet societal needs. *Palgrave Comms*. 3:35.
- Wowk, K. and D. Yoskowitz. 2017. "Socioeconomic and Policy Considerations of Living Shorelines – U.S. Context." In: *Living Shoreline Approaches*. Bilkovic, Mitchell and Toft (Eds.). Taylor and Francis Publishing.
- Sutton-Grier, A., H. Bamford and K. Wowk. 2015. Future of Our Coasts: The Potential for Natural and Hybrid Infrastructure to Enhance the Resilience of Our Coastal Communities, *Economies and Ecosystems*. *Enviro. Sci. and Policy*. 51:137-148.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS