



Karen Akerlof, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Policy

Education

PhD, Environmental Science & Public Policy, George Mason University

Key Interests

Environmental Science Communication | Science Communication for Policy | Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making | Community Resilience and Adaptation

CONTACT

Phone: (703) 993-7069 | Email: kakerlof@gmu.edu

Website: karenakerlof.com

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- › Akerlof, K., Tyler, C., Foxen, S. E., Heath, E., Soler, M. G., Allegra, A., ... & Yarime, M. (2019). A collaboratively derived international research agenda on legislative science advice. *Palgrave Communications*, 5(1), 1-13.
- › Akerlof, K., Merrill, J., Yusuf, J. E., Covi, M., & Rohring, E. (2019). Key beliefs and attitudes for sea-level rise policy. *Coastal Management*, 1-23.
- › Akerlof, K. (2018). *Congress's use of science: Considerations for science organizations in promoting the use of evidence in policy*. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- › Akerlof, K., Covi, M., & Rohring, E. (2017). Communicating sea level rise: Media, public opinion, and engagement. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science*. Oxford University Press.

Research Focus

Most of my research sits at the intersection of governance with science and risk communication. It is primarily—though not exclusively—in the environmental domain. This work has three primary dimensions: 1) communication of science with policymakers; 2) public participation in decision-making; and 3) use of communication as a “soft tool” to achieve governmental policy goals.

In the Department of Environmental Science and Policy, I lead the environmental science communication concentration (ESCM) within the master's degree program and teach courses such as EVPP 429/529 Environmental Science Communication, EVPP 336 Human Dimensions of the Environment, and EVPP 608 Introduction to Environmental Social Science.

Current Projects

- In a study funded by the National Park Service, I am working with ideas42 and Haereticus Environmental Laboratory to build the research foundation for a strategy that encourages visitors' use of reef-friendly sun protection while within park boundaries.
- With funding from the Office of the Provost, I am collaborating with George Mason University Professors Chris Clarke, Katherine Rowan, and Jim Olds to scope the field of conservation and environmental science communication and associated graduate training needs.
- In a study with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and University of Michigan, we are exploring how congressional staff members access, interpret, and use science communicated to them within different policy contexts.
- Under a project funded by the National Science Foundation, I am working with colleagues from UCL and AAAS to investigate how communities of researchers and practitioners from across the globe prioritize social science needs in furthering the study and practice of legislative science advice.