

2008-2009 Speaker Series

“Influence of climate and sea level on barrier island evolution and implications for climate change.”

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Abstract: Approximately 10% of the world’s ocean shoreline is lined by narrow, mostly sandy barrier islands. They span all of the earth’s major climate regions from the tropics to the poles, on every continent except Antarctica. All barrier islands share a similar age, having existed near their present locations for the last 1,000-5,000 years.

Most coastal settings where barrier islands exist are influenced by a common set of physical and environmental factors—gently sloping coasts, sufficient sediment availability, and moderate wave and tidal energy. However, this talk will focus on patterns of the geographic distribution and the morphology of barrier islands that suggest sea level change and climate (especially storms) have fundamentally controlled both where barrier islands formed and their subsequent evolution. This is important to recognize as major changes in climate and sea level are expected this century.



*** Counts as an
academic/cultural
event in gen ed.***

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