

# Climate Stories, North Carolina

## Climate Communications Case Story



Accessibility



Intrinsic Value Framing



Personalization



Social Norms and Prompts

### PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

**Project Title:** Climate Stories, North Carolina

**Location:** North Carolina, USA

**Project Partners:** University of North Carolina Institute for the Environment, PBS, Yale University

**Date:** Released in 2017

**Climate Issue:** Warming lakes, shifting species distributions and migration, habitat loss

**Action Area:** Climate change awareness, changing perceptions

**Behavioural Theme(s):** Accessibility, Intrinsic Value Framing, Personalization, Social Norms and Prompts

**Audience:** Hunters and fishers, conservative Americans



*Climate change is a national security issue, it's a health issue, it's not just sportsmen wanting to catch more fish.*

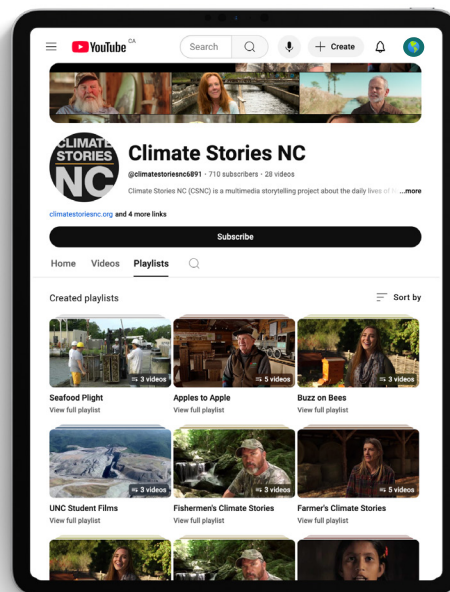
*— Richard Mode, Trout fisherman in North Carolina<sup>8</sup>*

## IMPACT STORY

Climate Stories, North Carolina is a series of short videos which aired on the local TV network, PBS NC. The series showcased stories of North Carolinians affected by climate change. Farmers, beekeepers, fishermen, hunters, apple growers, and more told their stories in what is typically a conservative state where people are less likely to be receptive to messages around climate change mitigation or adaptation. These climate stories and their impacts on viewers were studied and published by the University of Yale in the peer-reviewed article “Personal Climate Stories Can Persuade.” The article highlights the power of personal narratives to foster a deeper understanding of climate change impacts and finds that sharing individual experiences from relatable people (such as hunters and fishermen) can be quite effective in reaching unique audiences. More specifically, sharing stories in a way that is emotionally and intimately connected with difficult-to-reach audiences, like more conservative communities in the US, can be a persuasive communication strategy.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES INCLUDE...

- Providing vivid, real-world examples of how climate change affects local environments and daily life through personal narratives from affected community members;
- Stimulating public discussion and reflection on climate change by sharing diverse personal experiences and inviting others to contribute their own stories; and
- Studying, documenting, and sharing results that communicated the impacts of this storytelling method in a peer-reviewed article.



## COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Short Interview Videos:** Interview videos showed on-site conversations with local hunters, fishermen, and other community members in their fields, forests, and rivers. The videos highlighted personal experiences and observations, making climate change more relatable and urgent for the audience by connecting abstract scientific data with real-life impacts like witnessing the decline of migrating duck populations.
- **Media Campaign:** Personal stories were integrated into various media formats, including articles, podcasts, and videos. This multi-channel approach ensured that climate messages reached diverse audience segments and reinforced its urgency through multiple media touchpoints.
- **Peer-Reviewed Article:** The video project was used to research the power of storytelling in climate communication. Research findings offer insights into how personal stories can enhance public engagement and support for climate action.

## BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES & TAKEAWAYS

- **Accessibility:** Sharing stories through the PBS television network allowed the stories to reach a wide audience.
- **Intrinsic Value Framing:** The project framed climate change as a personal and community issue by highlighting its direct effects on individuals' daily lives, livelihoods, and hobbies. This framing encouraged audiences to see the correlations between the stories shared and their own lives, and how addressing climate change aligns with their identity and values.
- **Personalization:** Personal narratives were used to make climate change impacts more tangible and emotionally resonant. By using real-life experiences, climate stories bridge the gap between abstract climate science and personal impact within a specific demographic.
- **Social Norms and Prompts:** By showcasing a range of personal stories, the project normalized discussions about climate change. It also encouraged others to share their own experiences, contribute to a collective narrative, and drive community-wide engagement on climate issues. According to the peer-reviewed article, listening to personal climate stories had a significant positive impact on climate change beliefs and risk perceptions across diverse political and regional groups.

## SOURCE

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). (2017). Climate Stories NC [Video series]. <https://www.pbs.org/show/climate-stories-nc/>

## CONCLUSION

The Climate Stories, NC video series effectively demonstrates the power of audience-tailored storytelling in climate communication. By integrating individual experiences with broader climate issues, the project successfully connected with difficult-to-reach audiences, providing a powerful example of how personal narratives can increase awareness, change perceptions, and drive climate action.

### MORE CASE STORIES AND RESOURCES ONLINE

This case story was developed by ICLEI Canada through the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) as part of a Climate Communications Toolkit. Find more case stories and additional climate communications resources online at [icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit](https://icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit)

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### CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

