

Understanding Great Lakes Climate Science and Planning Needs

Although many tools are available to assist communities in assessing their vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change in the areas of human health, infrastructure, ecosystems, and emergency response, and in planning strategies for adapting to the changing climate, surveys and studies across the nation indicate there is a gap between communities' awareness of the changing climate and actually taking action toward needed adaptations.

NYSG Responds

In 2014 New York Sea Grant (NYSG) took the initial steps to enhance programming with its Great Lakes communities to ultimately increase their preparedness to the impacts of climate change.

NYSG offered a workshop that targeted municipal leaders of the Sodus Bay watershed (Lake Ontario). This workshop highlighted climate change projections for New York's Great Lakes; weather trends for Wayne County, NY; and types and examples of available tools. To assess the needs and barriers faced by communities, the workshop included a facilitated discussion paired with a survey that was developed using previous related-survey results.

Results from that climate workshop are being used to plan 2015 and 2016 programming to meet community needs. Highlights from the 2014 workshop survey indicated the top five barriers that hinder communities' climate change adaptation planning are:

- funding
- staff time
- political support
- technical capabilities, and
- facilitation assistance.

The survey participants identified their top five needs as:



*Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario in Wayne County, NY.
Photo: John Griebisch/Great Lakes Seaway Trail*

- financial guidance/resources
- access to information/tools
- access to data
- regional/local collaboration/coordination, and
- better understanding of how climate change impacts the natural and built environment.

This outreach by NYSG is helping local leaders and citizens take steps to assist their communities in improving their coastal resiliency.

Partners:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Grant Climate Change Capacity Building Initiative

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is New York Resilient Communities & Economies

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

New York Sea Grant Extension

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