

Living with the Ever-Changing Dunes: A Community Resilience Workshop

In the recent past, New York’s Great Lakes communities have experienced more frequent severe weather events, and coastal community leaders and residents are often finding they do not have adequate preparedness planning in place before the onset of these events.

Resilience or preparedness planning gives communities the ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment. However, because many of NY’s Great Lakes communities are relatively small and rural with limited resources, preparedness planning may not make the list of priorities.

The efforts of New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and its partners are assisting communities in understanding the issues associated with sudden or severe weather events and navigating cost-effective solutions for managing those events.

In June 2015, NYSG facilitated a workshop for municipal leaders and those who work, live, and play along the Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes and Wetlands Area. Workshop sessions demonstrated some of the pressing weather concerns, how individuals can be more resilient to these weather events, and what communities can do to increase preparedness.

This workshop was well-received, and attended by nearly 50 people. As a result of the workshop, people were made more aware of initiatives, such as Climate Smart Communities; what to pack in a “go bag;” and New York State Department of State grant opportunities that can help them be more resilient.

Individual and community resilience planning is still a relatively new concept for many Great Lakes communities, but NYSG is finding people are open to resilience-building concepts and eager to learn how they can be better prepared for the threats that accompany more frequent severe weather events.



Storms along Lake Ontario near Sandy Pond have caused damage to homes, cottages, boats, and other property. Photos: top: NYSG; at right: Ron Fisher



Partners:

- Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Coalition
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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

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