

Keeping New Hampshire's Coast Afloat

Policy Change & Financing Mechanisms for Resilient Coastal Communities

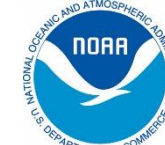


Ben Sweeney, NOAA Coastal Management Fellow
NHDES Coastal Program & Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

Northeast Regional Ocean Council
April 8, 2021



New Hampshire
Coastal Program
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Fellowship Project Focus

Track 1: Advance coastal community understanding and implementation of local stormwater and flood resilience funding mechanisms.

Track 2: Build relationships with organizations that have a direct connection to frontline communities to better integrate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into policy, planning, and decision making processes.

Track 1

Funding for
stormwater &
flood resilience

5-Step Process for Implementation



Sheils, M. & Suslovic, E. (2017). [“Moving from Contemplation to Implementation of Your Stormwater Management Plan.”](#) Maine Stormwater Conference.

Partnership with the City of Dover, NH

Committee to Study Stormwater and Flood Resilience Funding

- Formally established by City Council in November 2020
- Charged with providing recommendations by October 2021
- Comprised of 17 members representing various stakeholder groups
- Modeled after Portland, ME Sustainable Stormwater Funding Task Force



Evaluating Funding Options

Funding Options Considered

- General fund
- Fee-based
- System development charges
- Stormwater utility
- Sewer user fees
- Village districts
- Public private partnerships
- Grants, loans, and bonds

“S.A.F.E.” Evaluation Criteria

Secure – Dependable over the long-term

Adequate – Meets current needs and maintains existing level of service

Flexible – Adjustable as needs fluctuate over time

Equitable – Imposed costs are fairly assessed

Which Options Merit Further Exploration?

Stormwater Utility

- What rate structure would be most equitable?
- What data needs exist?
- Who would be charged?
- What would rates be?
- How could property owners receive credits?

Fee-based

- What fees exist (e.g., permit, plan review)?
- How much revenue is allocated to stormwater?
- What additional fees should be considered?
- How could fees combine with other options?

Public Private Partnership

- What would a P3 look like?
- What would initial costs be and is it affordable?
- What are the local benefits to financing with private investment?

Lessons Learned Thus Far

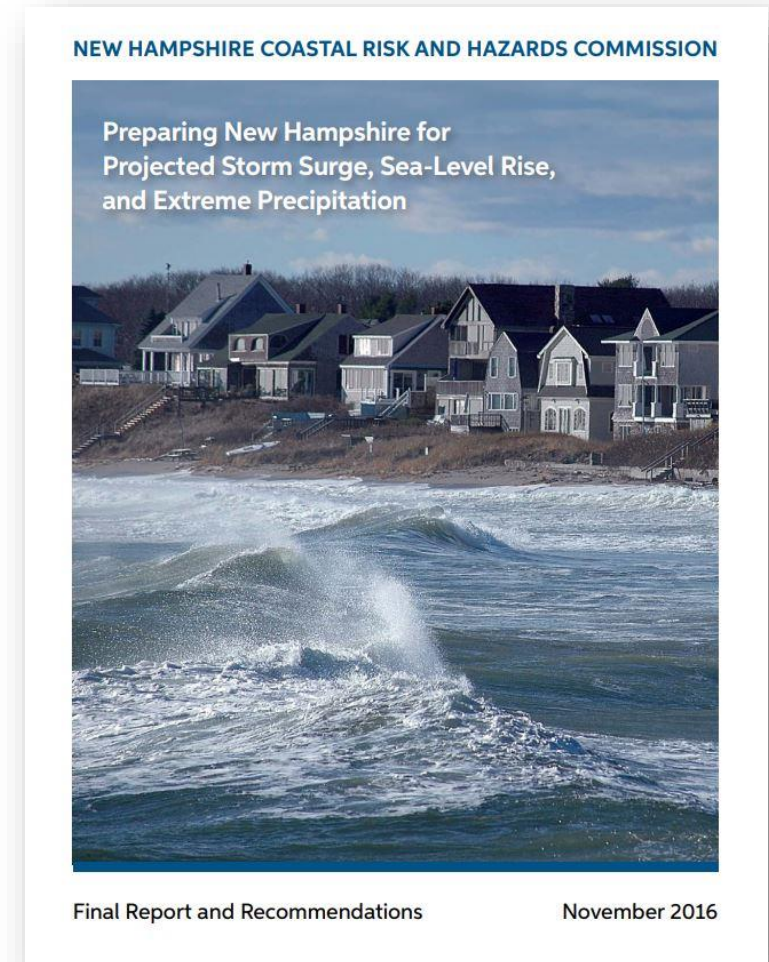
- Allowing committee members to go through their own discovery process is key for building support
- Committee process also serves as a learning opportunity for City staff
- Outreach and education on the committee's recommendations will require additional capacity and resources if City Council moves forward

Track 2

Building relationships
with organizations that
have a direct connection
to frontline communities

Genesis of the Project

- NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission generated a lot of momentum in the region
- Questions remain about how to implement some recommendations
- **Original goal:** facilitate a collaborative process to explore, evaluate, and advance state-level laws, regulations, policies, and programs that support on-the-ground resilience and adaptation efforts



Evolution of the Project

Brainstorming Workshop

- Convened stakeholders to help generate resilience policy ideas
- Participants were identified as “resilience champions” within their organization or community

Stakeholder Feedback

- Need to include underserved populations in policy process from onset
- Provide opportunities for underserved populations to contribute policy ideas
- Policies must incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations

New Focus on Frontline Communities

Frontline Communities: Those that experience the “first and worst” consequences of climate change. People who are highly exposed and have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to risks. Including but not limited to:

- People of color
- Low income
- Homeless populations
- Senior citizens
- Persons with disabilities
- Indigenous peoples
- Chronically-ill/hospitalized people
- Youth

Starting Conversations

Where do we begin?

- Relationships and trust need to be built before starting policy discussions
- Identify organizations that have a direct connection to frontline communities
- Start by reaching out to organizations that we already know
- Have conversations to listen, learn, and share

Anticipated learning outcomes

- Best practices for starting future conversations with frontline communities
- Corrective actions we can take to ensure frontline communities are not left out of policy, planning, and decision-making
- Ways we can better support frontline communities throughout our work

Lessons Learned Thus Far

- We still have a lot to learn about meaningful engagement practices
- We do not yet fully understand who frontline communities are, where they are located, or how to reach them
- Additional resources will need to be allocated to similar efforts after the fellowship concludes to continue momentum

Questions?

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in New Hampshire, showing a row of houses along a narrow strip of land. The water is dark green and blue, and there is a small pier or dock extending into the water. The town is situated on a peninsula or a narrow strip of land, with the water on both sides. The houses are mostly white with dark roofs, and there are some trees and greenery interspersed among them. A small boat is visible in the water to the right of the town.

Ben Sweeney
NOAA Coastal Management Fellow
NHDES Coastal Program & Piscataqua
Region Estuaries Partnership
Benjamin.R.Sweeney@des.nh.gov
(603) 559-0021