

NROC Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee | 2021-2023 Work Plan

The Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee is one of three NROC standing committees. This committee was established to inform and recommend to the Council how best to approach regional issues and coordinate activities related to coastal hazards in New England.

GOAL

Build hazards resilience to impacts of coastal erosion, flooding, storms, and climate change through region-wide dissemination of data, tools, and case studies, as well as fostering collaborative actions.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

NROC has identified the following strategies to advance coastal hazards resilience:

1. Promote regional dialogue on broad-scale adaptation strategies for responding to the effects of sea-level rise.
2. Facilitate data acquisition and user-friendly tools to support planning for and responses to coastal hazards.
3. Stakeholder engagement and communication

Strategy CHR-1: Promote regional dialogue on broad-scale adaptation strategies for responding to the effects of sea-level rise.

Activity 1.1: Organize regional roundtables focused on topics of regional interest to enable peer-to-peer sharing including regional landscape, experiences and lessons learned, research needs, and policy opportunities.

With current resources:

- Roundtable on managed retreat, including sharing landscape of current practice and approaches to managed retreat across the region, learning about the role of each of our NROC organizations in managed retreat, and exploring opportunities for integrating equity considerations.
- Roundtable on updated SLR projections and planning guidance, including how projections are being communicated and integrated into planning and policies. Opportunity to consider regional approaches to communications, planning and policies.

With additional resources:

- Build on managed retreat roundtable - a) Workshop with coastal managers on managed retreat to learn from outside the NE region; b) develop model managed retreat policies such as voluntary buyout programs, incentives, funding approaches; c) evaluate legal challenges, public trust rights, and public access as the intertidal gets narrowed by inundation and erosion; d) Host a climate migration learning session and training on how to communicate about climate migration.
- Provide training, facilitation support and/or resources to coastal community planning organizations working on retreat and migration, including building conversations and connections with receiving communities, understanding types of data needed for long term

planning, envisioning possible uses of land acquired through retreat and buyout, and equitable migration discussions.

Strategy CHR-2: Facilitate data acquisition and user-friendly tools to support planning for and responses to coastal hazards.

Activity 2.1: Support regional efforts to advance nature-based infrastructure and living shoreline management approaches.

With current resources:

- The Committee will hold an annual living shorelines day long working session to continue regional sharing of lessons learned on techniques, monitoring, permitting, policies, training, and stakeholder communication. The Committee will track needs, success stories, and opportunities for continued advancement of living shorelines in New England. This will also serve as an opportunity to share results of the TNC led monitoring protocols guidance and StoryMap, as well as develop additional ideas for future living shorelines projects in New England.
- Host a facilitated discussion on typical habitat conversion scenarios in New England living shorelines projects, including evaluating how to incorporate project climate change impacts in the habitat conversion scenarios. The scenarios will primarily focus on conversion of mudflat or degraded beach to fringing marsh and how to evaluate the ecological benefits of habitat in current state, the converted state, and with climate impacts. The goal of this discussion is to highlight how to better describe and/or quantify benefits of the living shorelines projects that convert habitat.
- Continued regional coordination for opportunities to clarify and refine permitting processes.
- Maintain a list of research questions and needs related to living shorelines and nature-based infrastructure and share with regional partners. A shared document will be updated annually to maintain list of current research needs. Example needs include:
 - More specific research around scour and rock sills at various scales on the nearshore environment;
 - Impacts of traditional structures compared to impacts of living shorelines and nature based solutions on habitat in expected future conditions; and
 - Understanding benefits and impacts of living shorelines and nature based solutions on EJ communities in New England.

With additional resources:

- Follow through on recommendations for advancing living shorelines in New England, including from roundtable and habitat conversion discussions.
- Host a community of practice on habitat conversion based on results of previous discussions. Focus areas may include ecological functions and values, understanding compensation, information needs for alternatives analyses, and more as identified by partners.

Activity 2.2: Organize learning sessions on tools and data that support planning for coastal hazards and sea level rise impacts.

With current resources:

- The Committee will identify tools and data that support partner interests and organize webinars, sharing opportunities at Committee and NROC meetings, or larger workshops and symposia. Potential focus areas include coastal resilience applications for social vulnerability, climate equity, and environmental justice tools; and Benefit Cost Analysis tools and training to support community proposal development for federal funding programs such as BRIC, NCRF, etc.
- The Committee will track coastal hazards data needs to support mapping, planning, and tool development in the region. A shared document will be updated annually to maintain list of current needs.

Activity 2.3: Leverage NERACOOS data, products, and services for coastal inundation observations and forecasting.

With current resources:

- Coordinate with NERACOOS and co-lead one or more roundtable discussions on topics such as storm surge, inundation and erosion forecasting, and modeling needs to inform future research and investments. Bring together state coastal management programs, NOAA, NERACOOS, modeling research groups. Kickoff with sharing end user needs and research questions, discuss gaps in current capabilities, and identify opportunities to build out capabilities in New England. Evaluate changes in needs and requirements from previous conversations in 2015.
- Coordinate with NE Sea Grant Consortium on regional priorities, funding opportunities, and coastal resilience related research needs. Invite chair of NESGC to participate in Committee meetings. Share current research needs with NESGC to inform funding opportunities.

Strategy CHR-3: Stakeholder engagement and communication

Activity 3.1: Broaden climate equity perspectives and build inclusivity through expanded stakeholder outreach and engagement with environmental justice communities and organizations.

With current resources:

- The Committee will collectively work to build diverse perspectives by identifying communities, organizations, and partners that should be included in discussions, regular committee communications, meetings, and planned activities.
- The Committee will participate in efforts to better define and understand equity in NROC context, map the NROC landscape of federal, state, regional and local climate equity programs and partnerships.

With additional resources:

- Organize a speaker series on coastal frontline communities and develop a strategy for engaging in discussions on coastal hazards resilience and nature-based solutions with these communities. The goal of the speaker series is to learn about the issues facing coastal frontline communities in New England, data and tools available to evaluate social vulnerability and environmental justice

issues in the region, and best practices for engaging with frontline communities. As a result of this speaker series, the Committee will be able to identify the NROC CHR role in building coastal hazards resilience in frontline communities.

Activity 3.2: Build and engage Committee membership through expanded and consistent communication, quarterly co-chair meetings, and bi-annual membership meetings.

With current resources:

- Co-chairs will maintain contact information for current committee members,
- Regularly share updates and results for NROC supported projects in meetings and NROC events.
 - Share updates and results of the TNC led Living Shorelines project at Committee meetings and develop plan with members to share with their networks. Track the outreach completed by committee members.
 - Report out roundtables at Committee meetings and develop plan with members follow up on key action items and potential funding proposals. Track the action items and next steps from each roundtable.