

PREPARING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IN RYE

GAINING INSIGHTS AND CHARTING A COURSE

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of Preparing for Climate Change in Rye was to provide information and tools to better understand how climate change (sea level rise, storm surge, more intense and more frequent storms, hotter summers and warmer winters) might affect Rye and its residents, businesses, and visitors. The goals of the project were to:

- Conduct workshops to facilitate discussion and raise awareness about climate change
- Identify priority issues and/or actions the town may want to consider to address impacts
- Begin discussion about how the community and existing municipal functions, plans, policies and regulations may be modified to address anticipated impacts from climate change



Workshops: Goals, Discussion Topics and Input

Workshop #1

"Project Kick-off"

April 1, 2014

(35 participants)

- Goals: Learn about what to expect in our region's climate, and identify impacts or areas of concern to address in future planning effort.
- Discussion Topics: **Freshwater Resources (20%), Impacts to Salt Marshes (15%), Road Impacts and Costs (13%), Public Health (11%), Sea Walls (9%), Stormwater Management (7%), Beach Erosion (7%), Economic Loss (7%)** [% is the percentage of participants who identified the topic as a priority.]

Note: Rockingham Planning Commission's Tides to Storms project will evaluate the following topics identified during group discussions at Workshop #1:

- ***Water Quality, Water Supply, Local Aquifer***
- ***Salt Water Inundation of Upland Areas***
- ***Changes to Marshes and Freshwater Wetlands, Changes to Location and Extent of Buffer Areas***
- ***State and Local Road, Culvert and Bridge Impacts, Flooding at Rye Harbor***
- ***Changes to Shoreline Habitat, Shifting of Sand Bars and Dunes***
- ***Stormwater Management Infrastructure (function, impacts)***

This project is funded by the NH Coastal Program, and delivered by the Rockingham Planning Commission, UNH Cooperative Extension, and NH Sea Grant in partnership with a local steering committee. Project materials & updates are available at the Town of Rye website: www.town.rye.nh.us

Workshop #2

"What Tools are Available?"

May 5, 2014

(38 participants)

- Goals: Become familiar with the existing tools and strategies and how they can be applied to climate change.
- **Discussion Topics: Master Plan, zoning and regulatory tools, Hazard Mitigation Plan, non-regulatory strategies; costs associated with implementing strategies; state regional and local examples of climate change planning and adaptation**

Workshops: Goals, Discussion Topics and Input (continued)

Workshop #3

"Values and Benefits of Saltmarshes"

June 2014

(25 participants)

- Goals: Learn about the functions and values of salt marshes and how they can protect against impacts from sea level rise and storms.
- **Discussion Topics: societal values and services provided by marshes; importance of buffers/separation of human activity and impacts; aesthetic value of marshes to tourism and recreation, town history**

Workshop #4

"Next Steps"

August 27

(15 participants)

- Goals: Use input from workshops 1-3 to refine project input and recommendations and transition to Rockingham Planning Commission's Tides to Storms project.
- **Discussion Topics: Economy/Local Business, Public Health, Stormwater Management**

Steering Committee Recommendations

Based on evaluation of information presented and participant discussions from Workshops 1-4, the Rye *Preparing for Climate Change* Steering Committee offers possible actions to begin addressing and preparing the town, its residents and business for changes in climate. These recommendations identify specific action areas for consideration that address issues affecting the town today and which may increase in the future depending on conditions.

- **Public Safety** – raise awareness of safety and preparedness by posting signs identifying evacuation routes; investigate preparation of a community-based emergency information calendar.
- **Communications** – increase awareness of climate change issues using public information posters and website "tip of the month".
- **Health** – evaluate how/if the steady increase in the incidence of insect borne disease in NH (ticks/Lyme) is affecting the town.
- **Electricity/Power** – investigate why portions of the town lose electricity during even minor weather events; consider bulk order and possible financing option for home and business owners to purchase generators (as implemented in Newfields).
- **Water Supply** - learn more about existing drinking water sources and what sort of infrastructure emergency plans the local water companies have in place to protect sources and service.
- **Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission** - Inform the Commission of Rye's issues and concerns about climate change and ways to prepare the town.