

# Regional Collaboration for Climate Resilience in Coastal Maine

## BACKGROUND

The New England Environmental Finance Center partnered with the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and the coastal towns of Harpswell, Phippsburg, and West Bath (together the 'coastal cohort') to help the three towns prepare for the effects of climate change and secure initial funding for shared coastal resilience priorities. As leaders of small, peninsular communities reliant on natural resource economies and home to aging populations, town administrators and staff sought to better understand climate impacts like sea level rise, storm surge, flooding, and erosion and identify associated adaptation strategies and funding sources.

*Coastal Flooding Inundates Wallace Shore Road in Harpswell, Maine  
Photo: Harpswell Conservation Commission*



## APPROACH

The New England EFC and CBEP piloted a three-part workshop series with the coastal cohort to identify community assets (physical, ecological, social), understand local climate-related hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks affecting those assets, and brainstorm and prioritize actions that build community resilience.

Workshops included opportunities to hear directly from community members representing local conservation commissions, land trusts, and the shellfishing industry, as well as guest speakers on technical, scientific, planning, and funding-related topics and approaches. In parallel to the workshops, each town worked through a step-by-step vulnerability and risk assessment tool adapted from the U.S. Climate Resilience

## HIGHLIGHTS

### ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

New England Environmental Finance Center (EFC)

### PARTNERS

Towns of Harpswell, Phippsburg & West Bath, Maine

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP)

Resilience Works, LLC

### LOCATION

Southern Midcoast Maine

### SCALE/SIZE

Municipal populations <5,000

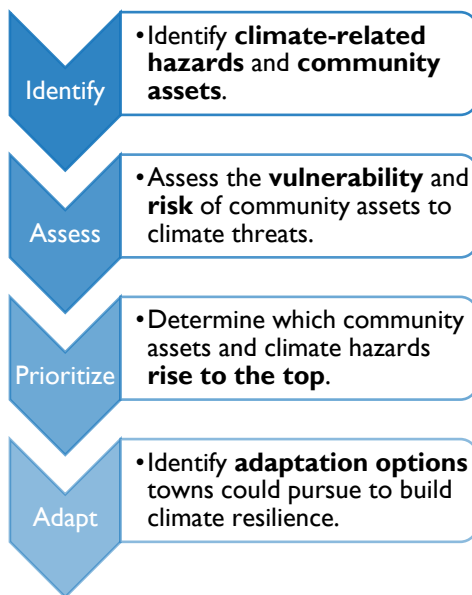
### KEYWORDS

Coastal Resilience, Climate Adaptation, Vulnerability & Risk Assessment, Sea Level Rise

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Toolkit to produce a prioritized list of vulnerable community assets, which informed subsequent town-specific and cohort-wide adaptation strategies and project ideas.



Sabino Landing in West Bath, Maine

Photo: GEI Consultants Drone Team

## KEY FINDINGS

Participating in this facilitated process formed new relationships and established a foundation for regional collaboration, which led the three towns to craft a joint proposal for funding to advance shared priorities. The coastal cohort successfully secured funds from the Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future for engineering services to assess three town landings/wharfs and their vulnerability to current and projected sea level rise, storm surge, and King tide events to inform a maintenance and upgrade plan for improved resilience. Selected town landings included Garrison Cove in Harpswell, Acre Lot Wharf in Phippsburg, and Sabino Landing in West Bath. Preliminary designs and cost estimates resulting from these analyses will position the towns to jointly seek additional state or federal funding for implementation.



Garrison Cove Town Landing in Harpswell, Maine

Photo: Bill Muldon

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit's Steps to Resilience](#)

[Harpswell, West Bath, Phippsburg to investigate climate's impact on future of town landings](#) in *The Times Record*

[Climate project to examine flood risk at Garrison Cove](#) in the *Harpswell Anchor*

This project was led by the [New England Environmental Finance Center](#) and sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.