

Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

PROJECT SUMMARIES

BUILDING A CLIMATE READY NEW JERSEY

Project Lead: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Funding Amount: \$72,493,449

SUMMARY

Building upon a strong coastal resilience collaborative established after Hurricane Sandy, this project is implementing a transformational resilience initiative across 16 coastal New Jersey counties. The region includes some of the most densely developed areas in the country, New Jersey's largest cities and most rural landscapes, ecologically critical coastal areas, and many overburdened communities.

This project will improve community readiness by creating a project pipeline for projects that restore wetlands, protect critical infrastructure, address stormwater flooding and urban heat islands, and create new public access and recreational opportunities. A related education and workforce development component will provide opportunities throughout the region.

DETAILS

Transformational Resilience Projects Implementation

Through continued community engagement and regional planning, the regional partnership identified several areas of need and actionable projects, culminating in the implementation of the three resilience projects listed below. These projects will address a range of issues in disadvantaged and overburdened communities such as flooding from storm surge, sea-level rise, and increased precipitation, as well as degraded water quality and loss of habitat. By combining green and gray infrastructure, these projects will also provide co-benefits to the communities, including expanded recreation opportunities, improved air quality, and increased access to New Jersey's waterways and natural areas:

- Stormwater Management and Neighborhood Resilience for Disadvantaged Overburdened Communities – Newark, Paterson, and Perth Amboy
- Coastal Ecosystem Restoration and Resilience – Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area
- Resilience, Recreation, and Access to the Urban Waterfront – Little Ferry Riverfront Park



Resilience Planning and Project Design Pipeline

Building on existing programs and expertise, this award will establish a resilience planning and project design pipeline that extends comprehensive, community-driven planning programs into new communities, brings more disadvantaged and overburdened communities into the resilience cycle, identifies more projects for design, and advances projects through the design phase and closer to implementation. The outcome will be completed resilience plans and project designs that are ready for future funding and financing. The projects will provide risk reduction and socio-economic benefits, and will benefit from regional coordination and a focus on collaboration and equity. The establishment of this organizational structure will ensure long-term success.

Building Enduring Capacity

This award contributes to New Jersey's efforts to build the regional governance structures and workforce needed to ensure enduring capacity beyond the life of the grant. A region-wide Education, Climate Awareness, Training, and Engagement (EduCATE) Initiative is being conducted by long-standing, federally-funded institutions including the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve and the state's three national estuary programs. Additional enduring capacity programs will be linked to other core activities of the award as opportunities for training and workforce development.

ABOUT THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE

In 2022, Congress appropriated approximately \$575 million, through the *Inflation Reduction Act*, to be competitively awarded for projects that help coastal communities become more resilient as they face increasing threats from extreme weather and climate change. This historic, transformative effort is known as the *Climate Resilience Regional Challenge*.

To learn more about the program and the funded projects, visit the website. coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge/

