

Working Toward Coastal Resilience in Gouldsboro

Maine Sea Grant Working Waterfront Storm Response and Preparedness Meeting
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Bill Zoellick
Gouldsboro Coastal Resilience Committee



Gouldsboro's coastal resilience work is supported by award CZM NA24NOSX419C0024 to the Maine Coastal Program from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Gouldsboro started work to increase its coastal resilience in early 2021.

With support from the Maine Coastal Program, it worked with FB Environmental Associates to create a ***Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan***.

In June of that year, learned how important this work would be.

Washed out culverts on Route 186 in Gouldsboro's village of Birch Harbor, June 9, 2021.

photo: Dale Church



We completed the vulnerability assessment and action plan by fall 2022 and presented it to the community at an afternoon open house in May 2023.



That fall, the town established its Coastal Resilience Committee and joined the Maine Community Resilience Partnership.

In January 2024, we found out that the vulnerability assessment had nailed it: the places identified as vulnerable got hammered.



Gouldsboro applied for and received two planning grants to help make vulnerable places more resilient in the face of bigger storms and rising seas.



A Community Action Grant from the Community Resilience Partnership to address vulnerabilities around Corea Harbor.

A Municipal Planning Assistance Grant to take a closer look at WWF infrastructure vulnerabilities in three other harbors.

Both projects are now underway.



What We've Learned that Might Be Useful to Others

- A town needs either a staff person whose time is substantially dedicated to this work or a committee that will be proactive and willing to work hard.
 - *Keeping up with funding opportunities*
 - *Writing proposals*
 - *Bringing diverse, relevant expertise*
 - *Developing partnerships with organizations that provide expertise*
 - *Managing grant-funded projects*
 - *Communicating with residents and stakeholders*
- Find experts who will work with you collaboratively as partners.
- With a good team in place, it is relatively easy to find money for **planning**. It is much more difficult to find the substantial sums needed to **do the work**.
- Doing this work requires towns to move from year-to-year budgeting to capital improvement planning. We need to look forward 5 – 10 years or more at capital investment requirements and obtaining funding to meet those requirements.

Boiling it Down

All of us represent and live in small, rural communities.

In a future with bigger storms and higher seas, each town needs to balance urgent needs to address vulnerabilities with its capabilities.

Doing this work requires expertise, personnel, and money.

Much of the expertise and many of the people you need are in your community. Find them and support them. That helps find the money.

Key question driving planning:

How do we increase our capabilities and financial capacity to meet increasingly expensive, urgent challenges while still being a place where the people that make this place a place can afford to live?

