

HIGH WATER MARK INITIATIVE FOR COASTAL NH

CASE STORY: SEABROOK, NH



OVERVIEW

The Town of Seabrook has coastline bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary. Its oceanfront coastline is protected by a large sand dune system with the exception of the northernmost portion of Seabrook Beach. Seabrook Beach as the largest remaining sand dune system in the state and thus it is a very high value asset. Route 1A is protected from the ocean by these sand dunes as well as local roads and private property.

Seabrook has a thriving and diverse working waterfront of fish and shellfish industry, businesses, restaurants, recreational facilities, and public parks and beaches. Although a popular warm weather destination, Seabrook Beach has a significant year-round residential population.



COMPLETED ACTIONS

Tides to Storms Vulnerability Assessment

In 2015, Seabrook participated in meetings to learn about the mapping and statistical data produced by the Rockingham Planning Commission's Tides to Storms Vulnerability Assessment. Stakeholders including Department Managers, officials and municipal staff offered insights about local flooding issues. The report offers recommended actions to address opportunities to incorporate climate adaptation and resilience in planning, emergency response, infrastructure management, investments, natural resource management and protection, and community outreach and engagement.

Master Plan

Amendment of state law RSA 674:2 in 2013 enabled municipalities to prepare a coastal management section in their master plan which may address projected coastal property or habitat loss due to increased frequency of storm surge, flooding and inundation. In 2016, Seabrook became the first municipality in New Hampshire to adopt a Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation chapter in their Master Plan. The new chapter describes the town's current and future impacts from sea-level rise and storm related flooding and offers recommendations to adapt and create a more resilient community. The chapter includes an action plan containing specific adaptation measures identified by municipal Department Heads and facilities managers.

Climate Highlights

- ✓ Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation Master Plan Chapter
- ✓ Sand Dune Research and Restoration

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Seabrook-Hamptons Estuaries Alliance

The mission of the Seabrook-Hamptons Estuaries Alliance is to protect the coastal and aquatic resources and preserve the Hampton-Seabrook estuarine system through education, community outreach and research. The Alliance works collaboratively with the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup and stakeholders in Hampton, Hampton Falls and Seabrook to fulfil its mission, and is actively seeking grant funds to develop a Master Plan for the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary.

Sand Dune Research and Restoration

Seabrook residents and the Seabrook Beach Village District have collaborated with researchers from NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension on raising awareness of the importance of healthy sand dunes in protecting oceanfront property and infrastructure. Residents participated in several informational workshops and creation of a dune grass "garden" which supplies dune grass free of charge to local residents to replant dunes in front of their property.

NEXT STEPS

Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

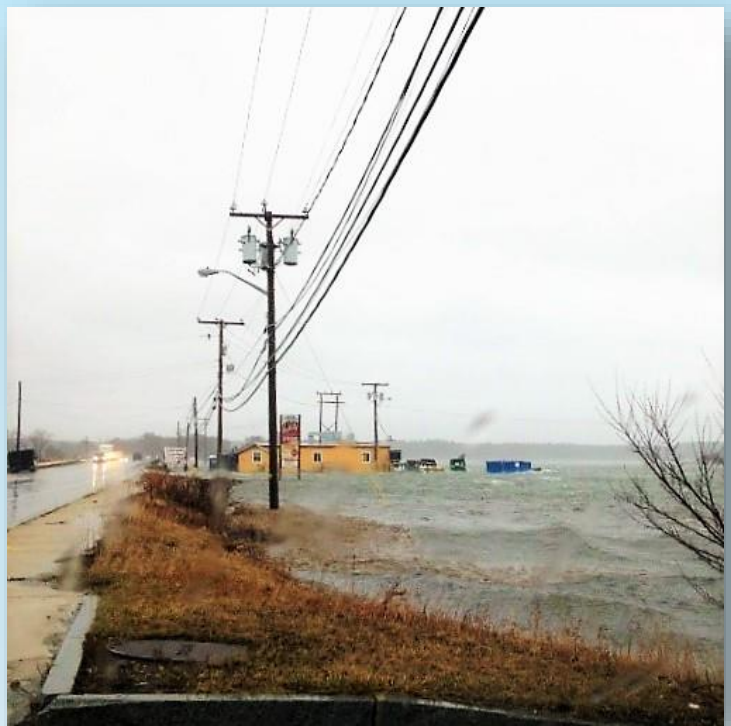
In 2018-2019, Seabrook will be updating its natural hazards mitigation plan. This plan update should incorporate results from the Tides to Storms Vulnerability Assessment (2015) including maps, statistical information about asset impacts, and recommended actions to reduce risk and vulnerability.

Floodplain Development Standards

Seabrook's floodplain development ordinance should be updated to require more resilient construction in the federally regulated floodplain (100-year storm/1% annual chance flood or the base flood elevation). Increasing the requirement for "freeboard", elevating structures 1-2 feet above the base flood elevation, would prevent flooding under many conditions and reduce risk and vulnerability for property owners.

Outreach and Education

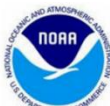
Seabrook decision makers have long recognized the importance of keeping climate adaptation and resilience in the forefront of planning and discussions among municipal officials, staff, boards and commissions, and the public. The Town continues to partner with the RPC and other technical service providers and researchers to provide new science, guidance and assistance to help keep these discussions moving ahead toward continued action.



[Visit Seabrook's High Water Mark signs at the Town boat launch on River Street and at Brown's Lobster Pound on Route 286.](#)

For more information about the High Water Mark Initiative for Coastal NH visit

www.rpc-nh.org/highwatermark



This project was funded, in part, by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program.