



# NOAA's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

### Alaska

#### **Bristol Bay Guardians**

**Recipient:** The Nature Conservancy – Igiugig Village

**Funding Amount:** \$1,999,470

The Yup'ik, Dena'ina, and Sugpiaq peoples of Southwest Alaska have lived within the Bristol Bay region for millennia, sustained in large part by *sayak*—the sockeye salmon. While this region continues to support more wild salmon populations than anywhere else on Earth, impacts from climate change are readily apparent. This project will expand current community-based monitoring efforts in the tribal community of Igiugig and share lessons learned and approaches taken with nearby tribal communities. The goal is to create a regional “guardians” network based on Canada’s successful [Indigenous Guardians](#) programs. The focus is on investing in communities, expanding training opportunities for residents, and uplifting Indigenous and local knowledge in regards to land relationship planning (i.e., natural resource management) practices. The initiative uses the strengths of Indigenous knowledge to guide Western scientific methodologies and further relationships among tribes and all levels of government and community.

#### **Bristol Bay Climate Adaptation Planning Program**

**Recipient:** Bristol Bay Native Association

**Funding Amount:** \$2,000,000

Led by a consortium of 31 federally recognized tribes, the project will center Indigenous knowledge and practices in climate adaptation planning, identifying community needs and priorities and creating solid, tangible solutions for a historically underserved population in a remote, hard-to-access area of Alaska. Partners from across the Bristol Bay region will join together in a three-phase project that will establish the Bristol Bay Regional Resilience Collaborative to coordinate regional climate adaptation planning while prioritizing education, action, and implementation. This will build enduring capacity and integrate climate adaptation into all facets of regional planning, securing a resilient future that sustains the communities’ natural resources, way of life, and economy.

#### **Stronger, Together: Expanding Climate Adaptation Technical Assistance for Frontline Alaska Native Communities**

**Recipient:** Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

**Funding Amount:** \$74,950,045

Alaska is an underserved state on the front lines of climate change–related impacts that are changing the Arctic landscape and affecting every aspect of life in remote Alaska Native communities. The most effective way to increase preparedness and reduce exposure is to increase the region’s capacity to understand risk and develop and implement solutions. This project envisions transforming the landscape of Alaska Tribal climate adaptation activities from a state of very limited capacity to a thriving network of practitioners that are making rapid progress toward addressing extremely complex, long-term problems such as community relocation, behavioral health, and food sovereignty.

The inspiration for this vision, and the foundation for achieving it, is based on the strength and resiliency of Alaska Native cultures. The project will serve nearly 100 Alaska Native communities and focus on three major adaptation actions: 1) establishing a community climate risk assessment program; 2) expanding statewide tribal adaptation technical assistance; and 3) networking and knowledge sharing.

## California

### Regional Adaptation for Climate Resilience of Monterey Bay Coastal Communities

**Recipient:** California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

**Funding Amount:** \$71,100,000

The highest priority climate risks for California's Monterey Bay region are flooding and wildfires—both of which have had devastating impacts on lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. This project, comprising dozens of agencies and institutions, will implement four adaptation strategies that create a regional, collaborative approach for addressing these risks while building capacity through workforce development. These transformative strategies include nature-based approaches designed to strengthen ecosystem and habitat resilience and protect human communities. At the same time—and with an emphasis on meaningful engagement with marginalized communities and tribes—this unified, region-wide approach will create generational impact by building the local knowledge, skills, and workforce necessary to create resilient infrastructure and improve the adaptive capacity to address current and future climate hazards.

## Federated States of Micronesia

### Strengthening Opportunities for Adaptive Response (SOAR)

**Recipient:** Catholic Relief Services – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

**Funding Amount:** \$2,000,000

The goal of this project is to elevate the voices and priorities of vulnerable people in the coastal areas and remote islands of the Federated States of Micronesia and provide the technical and financial resources needed to jumpstart the priority resilience projects that will set the stage for sustained collaboration beyond the life of the project. The Strengthening Opportunities for Adaptive Response (SOAR) project aims to reach 30,000 individuals across 39 coastal communities (14 in Chuuk and 25 in Yap), where they will build a network of learning and foster coordination that leverages existing research, encourages the stewardship of natural resources, and creates the evidence needed to expand coastal resilience work in the near and long term.

## Hawaii

### ‘Āina Restoration through Community Governance to Advance Climate Resilience in the Hawaiian Islands

**Recipient:** University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program

**Funding Amount:** \$68,497,799

The goal of this project is a reinvigorated *moku* system (a Native Hawaiian framework for traditional land tenure and contemporary biocultural stewardship) to build a resilient future for the Hawaiian Islands. Actions include 1) conservation and restoration of watersheds by removing invasive species and establishing native forests to reduce wildfire risk and decrease sediment loading downstream; 2) community-based coastal stewardship through building natural infrastructure to protect communities and habitat; 3) restoring marine abundance by restoring *loko i‘a* (Native Hawaiian fishponds), limu

(seaweed), and coral reefs to reinvigorate habitat and support thriving cultural and subsistence practices; 4) sharing knowledge and creating partnerships by strengthening networks of Indigenous and place-based organizations to engage in collective action and work toward common goals; 5) reducing risk and improving disaster resilience by establishing new green infrastructure projects and building capacity within at-risk communities; and 6) advancing community governance and co-stewardship models.

## Louisiana

### **EMPOWER: Enabling Meaningful Progress for Water Equity and Resilience through the Greater New Orleans Regional Water Plan**

**Recipient:** New Orleans Community Support Foundation

**Funding Amount:** \$1,208,108

This project builds on more than a decade of planning and collaboration across the greater New Orleans region to adopt a holistic, adaptive water management vision that centers the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. This vision will enable greater cohesion in selecting community green infrastructure projects and ensure the investments address multiple climate hazards and realize multiple benefits. This project will result in 1) a regional approach to making key water management and climate adaptation data more accessible to the community; 2) a policy manual for holistic, adaptive management of green infrastructure projects; and 3) a public communications campaign that highlights the collaborative's efforts and findings with media, events, workshops, and facilitated conversations about management efforts across the region.

### **Enhancing the United Houma Nation's Short-, Mid-, and Long-Term Coastal Resilience**

**Recipient:** United Houma Nation

**Funding Amount:** \$56,573,066

In Southern Louisiana, the United Houma Nation is pursuing a comprehensive approach to addressing coastal climate change through a multiphase project that views resilience through a cultural, environmental, economic, and emergency-response lens. Phases one and two involve upgrading community resilience hubs across six parishes, all of which serve critical functions, including serving as evacuation and distribution sites. Phase three focuses on strengthening and expanding the tribe's communications infrastructure, allowing for more effective communication before, during, and after disasters. In the final phase, the tribe will proactively strategize with its citizens about 1) developing a community-led migration strategy and 2) strengthening land stewardship by implementing a community land trust.

### **Southwest Louisiana and Central Acadiana Resilient Future**

**Recipient:** ByWater Institute, Tulane University

**Funding Amount:** \$1,998,800

This project will use a multipronged approach for community-based regional planning and governance to develop a coordinated vision and sustainable, resilience-focused action plan for Louisiana's Southwest and Central Acadiana. Activities include analyzing existing plans; characterizing climate risk; defining best practices; prioritizing potential projects; evaluating policies; and developing engineering reports to move prioritized projects toward implementation. To meet future needs, the project will set up a regional collaborative that offers continued coordination, implementation, and evaluation, as well as sustained knowledge and resource sharing. This funding supports foundational building blocks needed for long-term success, including filling in technical and data-related

information gaps; helping communities identify and use appropriate data and tools; strengthening coordination between governments at all scales, including tribal; assessing the robustness of existing resilience projects, policies, and programs; and evaluating equity impacts.

## Maine

### **Resilient Maine: Local Adaptation and Resilience Actions at a Coastwide Scale**

**Recipient:** Maine Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

**Funding Amount:** \$69,008,683

Maine’s vision is to become a national leader in climate resilience among rural states by the end of this decade. This project supports the goals outlined in “Maine Won’t Wait” (the state’s award-winning climate action plan), all of which are designed to make Maine more resilient to climate impacts, foster economic opportunity and prosperity through climate action, and advance equity. This project will reduce climate impacts through nature-based solutions, while strengthening the resilience of Maine’s working waterfronts and building enduring capacity to prepare for, and respond to, climate change. Activities include supporting underserved, rural, and tribal communities in the development and implementation of climate adaptation strategies; expanding the availability and use of technical assistance tools and training focused on flood risk, saltwater intrusion, bluff stability, and living shorelines; updating the state’s regulatory framework to support climate resilience; conducting demonstration projects that incentivize regional collaboration and nature-based solutions; and strengthening the climate resilience of vulnerable public infrastructure and working waterfronts.

## Minnesota

### **Advancing Regional Climate Resilience for Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Region**

**Recipient:** St. Louis County

**Funding Amount:** \$1,849,228

This project will unite collaborators under the shared priority of proactively addressing the impacts of climate change in the coastal region of Minnesota’s Lake Superior—the largest Great Lake and second largest freshwater lake in the world. Project goals will be achieved through five overarching strategies: 1) establishing a regional resilience collaborative; 2) incorporating Indigenous knowledge; 3) building community capacity; 4) creating a regional resilience plan and pathways to implementation; and 5) providing resources and technical support to communities. An important aspect of the effort will involve engagement with tribal nations and local communities.

## New Jersey

### **Building a Climate Ready New Jersey**

**Recipient:** New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

**Funding Amount:** \$72,493,449

Building upon a strong coastal resilience collaborative established after Hurricane Sandy, this project will implement 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 for natural solutions that support ecosystem and community resilience goals by creating a planning and project design pipeline that advances projects through design and implementation. The project is also supporting transformational resilience projects in multiple overburdened communities, projects that will restore wetlands, protect critical

infrastructure, address stormwater flooding and urban heat islands with green infrastructure, and create new public access and recreational opportunities. Additionally, the Education, Climate Awareness, Training, and Engagement (EduCATE) Initiative will be developed and implemented to provide education, workforce development, training, and entrepreneurship opportunities throughout the region.

## Ohio

### **Building Resilience to Extreme Weather in Northeast Ohio**

**Recipient:** Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition

**Funding Amount:** \$1,310,142

The Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition will establish a resilience hub of 30 community-based organizations in a region experiencing high poverty rates and climate change vulnerability. Through regional collaboration and local expertise, the coalition will address barriers to climate resilience, invest in climate literacy and public engagement, and secure funding to implement executable resilience projects. The project builds on longstanding efforts to address disproportionate impacts of extreme weather and flooding in the region while building capacity among newer community-based organizations, maximizing the breadth of community benefits.

## Rhode Island

### **Growing Regional Resilience Coordination on Aquidneck Island**

**Recipient:** Aquidneck Land Trust (formerly City of Newport)

**Funding Amount:** \$1,999,777

Aquidneck Island, Rhode Island, home to the three municipalities of Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth, in addition to Naval Station Newport, faces increasing climate threats to water quality, conservation, transportation, food systems, and beyond. According to the Aquidneck Land Trust, at the current rate of development, all of Aquidneck Island's remaining unprotected open spaces, if not conserved, will be developed between now and 2050. This project, led by the Aquidneck Land Trust in partnership with the island municipalities and the Navy, and in collaboration with many local stakeholders, seeks to capitalize on the momentum of resilience initiatives already underway. Committed to conserving the island's open spaces and building on prior successful projects (including the conservation of over 2,800 acres), the land trust will use this opportunity to grow their island-wide approach to resilience, offering technical assistance, capacity building, and actionable strategies for responding to climate change. They will work with their established network of partners to implement resilience projects that include nature-based solutions to address threats from flooding, sea level rise, and water pollution.

## U.S. Virgin Islands

### **Climate Resilience and Risk Reduction in the U.S. Virgin Islands**

**Recipient:** U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources

**Funding Amount:** \$69,000,000

The goal of this project is to protect important natural and cultural areas in the Virgin Islands through community-led projects and government-led initiatives, building on momentum that has been 40-plus years in the making. The project will enhance community resilience by 1) acquiring four properties at risk from development; 2) creating a working group that will help guide the implementation of nature-based solutions throughout the territory; and 3) training area youth regarding nature-based

solutions, which will also provide local capacity for conducting restoration projects. The combination of these efforts will provide enhanced water security, help protect nearby communities from flooding and drought, and protect cultural and ecological resources while providing public access for Virgin Islanders to enjoy natural resources.

## Virginia, Maryland, Delaware

### **Leveraging Cooperative Extension to Build an Enduring Capacity for Equitable and Inclusive Resilience in Rural Agricultural Communities across Coastal Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware**

**Recipient:** Biological Systems Engineering, Virginia Tech University

**Funding Amount:** \$1,973,267

This project will establish a regional collaborative to support climate resilience in rural communities in the Delmarva region, where agriculture plays a key role in the local economy and culture. Project partners will conduct a needs assessment and a series of community listening sessions to identify current capabilities, challenges, and opportunities to increase resilience, particularly in low-income, minority, and agricultural communities. The project will then design and implement educational programming to help address these challenges. Led by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, this project will create enduring capacity among extension professionals and rural localities to initiate climate adaptation and resilience projects more effectively and engage with resilience-building efforts more broadly.

## Washington

### **The Washington State Coastal Climate Resilience Initiative: Accelerating Implementation of 20 Years of Partnership Efforts**

**Recipient:** Washington Coastal Zone Management Program

**Funding Amount:** \$73,587,134

Over 20 years of foundational work by the Washington State Coastal Climate Resilience Partnership (state and local agencies, tribes, and other local and national partners) produced a shared, regional vision for improved climate resilience. This funding will allow their vision to continue its strong march into reality and implementation. This project consists of five transformational adaptation actions including executable projects that will result in habitat restoration, the realignment of State Route 112, shoreline restoration, and stormwater drainage improvements. Funds will also be used to advance project planning and design, grow an invigorated, climate-informed workforce and strengthen regional coalitions that will advance integrated and equitable coastal management across Washington's entire coastal zone.

### **Regional Collaboration for Better Resilience Outcomes in the Puget Sound Basin**

**Recipient:** King County, Washington

**Funding Amount:** \$1,999,963

Washington's Puget Sound basin is home to more than five million people and is the most densely populated region in the Pacific Northwest, supporting key urban centers including Seattle and Tacoma and 19 federally recognized Coast Salish tribes. This project will enhance regional collaboration by providing staffing and programming support to the Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative, a network of local and county governments, tribes, regional agencies, and other organizations working to build community, economic, and environmental resilience to climate change. With this funding, the collaborative will strengthen local and regional capacity, partner with Coast Salish tribes to

increase regional understanding of climate change impacts, and establish a knowledge base of climate preparedness resources.

## Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan

### Accelerating Natural Flood Management in the Lake Superior Basin

**Recipient:** Northwest Regional Planning Commission

**Funding Amount:** \$1,451,065

The project site is an area hit hard by catastrophic, repetitive flooding (six federal disaster declarations between 2012 and 2022) affecting local communities and an extensive network of state, local, and tribally managed roads. Funding will be used to 1) identify how the loss of headwater wetland storage and floodplain connectivity is contributing to the flooding problem; and 2) implement high-impact, nature-based solutions to combat this flooding by restoring the natural hydrology. The project is led by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, a cooperative of local governments and tribal communities. Road maintenance responsibilities stretch across three states, six counties, five cities, one village, 33 towns, and two tribes. The root causes of flooding and potential restoration opportunities will be investigated using new approaches that integrate spatial and field-based assessments.

**For more information on the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge,** visit the website: [coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge](https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge).