

Maine Climate Council – Community Resilience Working Group Meeting

Friday, June 25, 2026

DMR Conference Room, 195 McKown Point Rd, West Boothbay Harbor (HYBRID)

Meeting Summary: The purpose of this meeting was to meet in person with a hybrid option to a) hear a presentation from Aidan Lurgio, a Microbiologist in the Public Health and Aquaculture division of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and b) bring together Community Resilience Working Group (CRWG) members to monitor *Maine Won't Wait* climate action plan progress and implementation and ensure collaboration and information sharing across working group members.

Working Group Member Participants In Attendance, by Organization: *University of Maine, Bowdoin College, Town of Rumford, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, Tellus Civic Science/NOAA, Maine Geological Survey, New England Environmental Finance Center, the Nature Conservancy, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission, Maine State Resilience Office (Community Resilience Partnership, Flood Ready Maine Program, Resilience Collaborative Program) Maine Center for Disease Control, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, Maine Emergency Management Agency, Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning, Maine Public Health Association, Volunteer Maine, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Town of Damariscotta, Maine Climate Science Information Exchange, Island Institute*

Public participants: *Enough.co, Stone Environmental, The Nature Conservancy, Island Institute*

Presentation (PowerPoint attached)

- Topic: Monitoring for Vibrio bacteria in Maine oysters. An emerging issue resulting from climate change.
- Presenter: Aiden Lurgio, (aidan.u.Lurgio@maine.gov) Bureau of Public Health and Aquaculture, Biotoxin-Water Quality Lab. Maine Department of Marine Resources
- Forthcoming paper: Journal: Applied and Environmental Microbiology
 - Title: Seasonality of Vibrio parahaemolyticus in the eastern oyster, Crassostrea virginica, along the coast of Maine, USA

Discussion Notes

- Will these findings be shared with the industry?

- Yes, will be publishing the paper and will share trends. 2023 was a hot year and Gulf of Maine waters are getting warmer. 2025 had less *Vibrio* and it will be interesting to discuss results with industry. This testing is focused on the growing area / water itself. Aquaculture industry has other steps in the process to cleanse shellfish. There are concerns with the number of bacteria combined with sun and other conditions that lead to illness.
- How are these findings being shared with DHHS and DECD?
 - This is the beginning of a collaboration; will share once they have more info in 2025. There is a food working group with multiple participating agencies including DMR, at which Aiden can present findings.
 - Kohl works on it at the national level and Maine state agencies are very well coordinated (DMR + CDC + DOE)
- Disease spread?
 - Genome sequencing at HETL expanded with partnerships. Knowing specific bacteria helps address outbreaks (different species / different cause).
 - People often get sick from something within 7 days, not at their last meal.
- Climate change range expansion/impacts?
 - Native oysters were not in Maine when there were colder waters. With water warming, oysters are expanding their range and expanding the aquaculture industry. Positive impacts of oysters: water filtering; use in living shorelines with oyster shells in lieu of rip rap rocks; some research on habitat creation on oyster cages.
 - Towns can regulate oysters/shellfish; can't have statewide plan on top of ordinance.
 - In general, the clam industry does not like wild oysters, some view oysters as outsiders. While warmer waters lead to increases in green crabs (major predator of softshell clams) some blame oysters for clam spat predation. [DMR prepared a white paper on this](#) and found that oysters have no significant impact on softshell clam decline; the primary cause of the decline is predation by European Green crabs which are increasing in abundance with warming Gulf of Maine waters.
- There are no permitting procedures for restoration aquaculture (a concept for pollution mitigation/ecological). Leasing processes are designed for commercial applications. Some researchers are looking into restoration aquaculture for its own benefit.

Updates from Working Group Members

- **Maine CDC:** [Extreme Temperature Response and Resilience: A Guidebook for Maine Communities](#) was recently released. This includes checklists for managing extreme weather events and [how to operate cooling/warming centers](#). Maine CDC can provide trainings upon request; already supported 13 counties with trainings and working with County EMA officials to incorporate extreme temperature response into County Emergency Management Plans. You can also [order paper copies through this form](#). Pollen monitoring data will be published soon, on the [MaineTracking Network website](#).
- **Maine Geological Survey:** The Climate Council's [Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Interim Report](#) was recently published. Coastal erosion and sea level rise information can be found on page, 24-32, well developed content across full report. [Tide gage network is expanding](#) to allow monitoring and improve understanding of localized water levels and the impact of storm events. This was funded by a grant awarded to GMRI and supported by NERACOOS, and additional funding is needed to continue the work. MGS is also working with GMRI on a [coastal flood elevation tool](#), using FEMA-based flood elevation (all tide data intersected).
 - CRRC NOAA Resilience Maine grant is supporting the following projects: 1) Updates of coastal bluff maps; all of Casco Bay is complete and includes information on sediment supply. Significant because coastal bluffs are not protected under NRPA, but sediment plays a key role in bluffs and in erosion. 2) Living shoreline (LS) decision support tool now includes wave information (developed by UMaine); CRRC projects selected for conceptual models. 3) Permitting the design of 3 LS sites and construction at one of them. 4) Hiring a contractor to map Maine's coastal bluffs, 26 miles of coastline, final stage of contractor selection.
 - Working with the Greater Portland Council of Governments on language for a bluff management ordinance for communities to implement.
 - Planning a series of workshops in conjunction with the Maine Coastal Program and RPOs on NBS, which will link to the model ordinance and also bluff map updates.
- **Catherine Lajoie** (student rep to Working Group): Working to send colleagues to CRWG and to identify actions that support the plan, increase hope, and decrease stress associated with the implications of climate change. A lot of hopelessness among colleagues, [Guide for Climate Action](#) has been a great resource, see <https://www.justmeforjustus.org/> with a mission of "investing in Maine's young leaders to create lasting power for their rural communities and the natural environment". Planning a seminar in Gardiner.

- **Town of Damariscotta:** The stormwater retention project under the town parking area is complete, and training for the deployable flood wall is underway. Multiple projects implementing MWW strategies:
 - Working on pedestrian improvements for cycling and walking to minimize the need for car traffic, GHG reduction.
 - Strategy B: Workforce and Housing: Supporting the development of energy-efficient, low-impact workforce housing (supported by various grants: LCRPC, ARPA, HOP).
 - Identifying and prioritizing culvert replacements. Need to map vulnerability inland.
 - Comprehensive Plan found consistent; includes focus on resiliency and communications with the public, ready for when there are significant events.
 - Installed 4 EV stations, 8 ports for level 2 charging (significant expansion)
- **Maine Public Health Association:** Broadly sharing information on LD 1 with stakeholders, including in national webinars. climate education materials - available in 9 languages: <https://www.mainepublichealth.org/news/climate-resilience-materials>
- **Maine Emergency Management Agency:**
 - Expand access to funding and financing for climate adaptation:
 - BRIC funds were pulled by the federal administration, then re-released after litigation. Deadline was June of 2026 (Christine Whelan going through applications). MEMA anticipates submitting \$ 42.6 million in total project costs for consideration. This is the first time MEMA has seen more implementation/construction project applications than design and scoping.
 - FY24 flood mitigation assistance NOFO finally released; deadline July 6
 - FY26 CDS earmark funding includes 3 projects, 2 moving forward. One for a York County EMA flood protection project and one for a Hendricks Head infrastructure project in Southport.
 - Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund. Waiting on NOFO to be released. Although not confirmed, MEMA is expecting to have to re-submit the application previously submitted in September of 2025.
 - MEMA is working through the biennial budget process and is discussing the potential to request a further cost match for the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund. LD1 was a massive success, but could only put forward \$750k in cost share to jumpstart the program (if awarded by FEMA). MEMA received \$55 million in

project interest during a solicitation, which would require closer to \$5.5 million in state cost share.

- Improve Maine's preparation for and recovery from natural disasters:
 - MEMA is seeking to increase the cap for the Disaster Recovery Fund. If FEMA Review Council recommendations are implemented, then states would be required to take on up to 25% more of the fiscal burden of disaster recovery.
 - Maine is preparing an Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan (due October 2028); MEMA's Natural Hazards Planner will be reaching out to engage working group members.
- **Town of Rumford:** Joined the Community Resilience Partnership! Conducting municipal facility energy audits. Community conversations reveal the library is used during hotter/colder days. The dam does not have any flood gates; the town proposed a study to address this need to the Army Corps, and it is included in the FY27 plan.
- **Bowdoin College:** Capacity building to identify the barriers for smaller communities to join CRP. Eileen is transitioning from faculty to Emeritus (congratulations Eileen!) and welcoming new colleagues. Hosted a symposium in April (CCAP-funded) exploring climate issues, connecting faculty and students from Bowdoin and elsewhere with community groups. Need: a centralized location for information (Bowdoin fellowship program, timing of applications, connecting students with opportunities).
- **Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission:** Receiving support in resilience efforts from Lydia, LCRPC's 8th intern. Working on advancing Strategy F through:
 - County hazard mitigation plan update, need one more town to adopt to finish up. Shout out to MEMA for their support. Used the process to meet FEMA requirements AND address social resilience. Referenced IRRC strategies and had towns fill out surveys and a needs assessment. Worked with all CRP-enrolled communities to discuss priorities to inform the project list of municipal needs. Lincoln County can now look for funding and play a matchmaking role.
 - Kicked off *Planning in the Wild*, holding workshops where the work is happening, such as an Earth Day Open House at Recycling (40 attendees on a rainy day), planting a seed in the compost, attending a Shoreline Erosion workshop at Pemaquid Beach (in collaboration with MGS), and a webinar on vegetation management and fire hazard protection.
 - Hiring Floodplain Manager position at the end of summer; anticipate coordinating this also supporting Regional Code enforcement.

- **Maine Climate Science Information Exchange:** Nature-based strategies: shoreline erosion control post-storms. There is a shortage of native plants at scale to do those projects. MCSI has identified a new on-ramp for public participation: work where there is already community capacity in garden clubs/conservation commissions and those who LOVE plants. Native shoreline plants are easy to grow and can support green stormwater infrastructure, hazard mitigation. The idea links the volunteer network with a DIY native plant production network.
 - Applied to NFWF (~\$1M) and NOAA (~\$2M) for resources to communities to cover start-up costs, pay interns, and gardening equipment/soil, etc. (decisions pending)
- **Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission:** Published [Southern Maine grid resilience plan](#) (Feb 2026) – asked how is weather/emergency planning being impacted? Implementing Microgrids in 5 towns. In response to a lack of ability to communicate during storm events (a big theme from the earlier conversations), SMPDC is coordinating with York County EMA, town emergency management staff, and Central Maine Power.
 - Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP): includes 40 communities in Maine and New Hampshire, assessment data. Working on grants and project coordination, stormwater, sewer, and floodplain ordinances. Relying on resources from the Stormwater Working Group and tying together initiatives of Flood Ready Maine.
 - Received a Coastal Communities Grant from Municipal Planning Assistance Program to support training on how to use existing tools and update them to current conditions, rather than creating new ones!
- **Tellus Civic Science/NOAA:** Supporting Resilient Maine scope of work (design guidance and scoping for nature-based strategies, planning, and process needs) and providing peer learning with other CRRC projects. Contributing to the WNERR resilience training academy, providing training to Shore Corps Stewards and Service Fellows. Working with multiple colleagues to develop Maine's Out of Harm's Way Network /community of practice.
- **Maine Department of Marine Resources:** DMR works primarily through the Coastal and Marine Working Group; linkage to CRWG is on public health issues, specifically shellfish closure decisions due to stormwater influences. We heard about DMR-focused Vibrio research earlier. Recently changed management decision on shellfish closures: formerly closed shellfish flats when rainfall exceeded 2 inches. With climate change-induced increases in the intensity and frequency of precipitation that exceeds 2 inches, DMR is now reopening flats in an automated formula based on decades of data.

Harvesters are also using depuration and other cleansing methods given shorter time periods for reopening .

- Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are changing with the arrival of new species due to changing temperatures and currents.
- DMR has new testing methods that require expensive laboratory retrofits. Increasingly using chemical and DNA-based methods. The Lamoine Office now has equipment to better serve eastern Maine.
- **Volunteer Maine:** 6 Service Fellows – 5 supported by NOAA, 1 by State of Maine working in/on a variety of projects: Castine focusing on housing, CEBE Norway working with a school district in Oxford Hills, learning opportunities, collaborating with Maine Green Schools Network, Stonington continuing into year 2; housing implementation, Hancock County Planning Commission balancing housing affordability and climate risk, Sunrise County Economic Council focusing on resilience for fishing-dependent communities, shore access, needs assessments, Van Buren working on entrepreneurial ecosystem for Connectivity Hub and Incubator
 - Maine Climate Corps – Shore Corps (17 stewards): Thompson Lake Environmental Association – Youth Conservation Corp: building better buffers and a site estimator tool, Island Institute: housing and resilience, Portland Youth Corps: started an alumni network.
 - Muskie School: 2 summer interns.
 - Betterment Foundation: “Conserve ME” mini-grants to support Western ME resilience projects.
 - If you have volunteer opportunities, create an agency profile on serve.maine.org, a statewide matching platform, 1 volunteer hour is worth \$32!
- **New England Environmental Finance Center:** Expanding access to funding and financing opportunities as the designated Resilience Finance Coordinator Provider (April 2026-April 2027 with potential to renew for 3 years) within CRP. Supports and provides: Technical assistance to CRP Regional Coordinators, Webinars, workshops, peer cohort, 1:1 tech assistance with CRP communities, Climate finance office hours with GMRI, virtual, joining at lunchtime.
 - See this link for all events, including registration and details: [Climate Finance Office Hours](#)
 - [Thursday, July 9](#) - 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm - In person at Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland
 - [Thursday, August 13](#) - 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm - Virtual Event
 - [Capital Stacks 101: Blending Grants & Financing Webinar](#) - Tuesday, July 28, 12-1 pm Virtual

- **State Resilience Office:** CRP has surpassed 300 participating communities. Target is 80% by 2030; now at ~60%. CRP has added Tribal Coordinators – Wabanaki Energy Sustainability Network. LD1 implementation is extensive and includes:
 - Certified Floodplain Manager Network, 10 positions at each of the RCs; communities are responsible for their own floodplain management programs; some councils are pairing Certified Floodplain Managers with Regional Code Enforcement.
 - SRO will be starting a project with the Northeast Water Science Center and the University of Maine to complete flood maps for the under-mapped parts of the State, areas that are more rural and /or don't rise to the top of FEMA's list (parts of LUPC territory, Washington, Hancock, York, Cumberland counties).
 - NOAA CRRC Resilient Maine activities include contracting with an engineering firm to provide no-cost technical assistance to up to 20 communities in nature-based design projects, completing a user's guide for the Coastal Flood Risk Model (hoping for initial data release Downeast this fall), and updating the Flood Resilience Checklist.
 - Completed the Climate Vulnerability Assessment of State Owned and Leased Infrastructure in Spring of 2026.
- **Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning:** Finalizing RFP process, in collaboration with SRO, to choose a consultant to prepare Online Risk Data Hub + Resilience Hub websites. Coordinating the Interagency Inland Flooding Working Group composed of federal, state, regional, nonprofit, and private partners. Field Day scheduled July 22 to see implementation projects in the 30-mile watershed (culverts, water quality improvements) and in the city of Gardiner (climate vulnerability assessment + capital investment plan). Working Group will provide interviews to Northeastern University researchers, studying engagement techniques. Developing an Out of Harm's Way Network / community of practice with colleagues at WNERR, NOAA, and Siler Consulting. Working on structure for the network and learning from other coastal states. Very controversial issue; planning for day long symposium in December.
 - Coordinating with the Maine Forest Service on: Community wildfire protection plans, Building a credentialed network of certified responders, Implementing a \$76k defense grant in Washington County, Maine Tracking network – online dashboards with public health impacts, including air quality
 - Applied for a grant for DHHS facilities for weatherization improvements to improve indoor air quality at Dorothea Dix and Riverview facilities in Bangor and Augusta respectively (decision pending).

- LUPC: updating their Comprehensive Land Use Plan, recently adopted new rules for storage and battery siting.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 8, 2026

- Hold more time for discussion/brainstorming; consider updates first, then prompts
- Consensus that in person discussion is very helpful, planning to schedule for hybrid